Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

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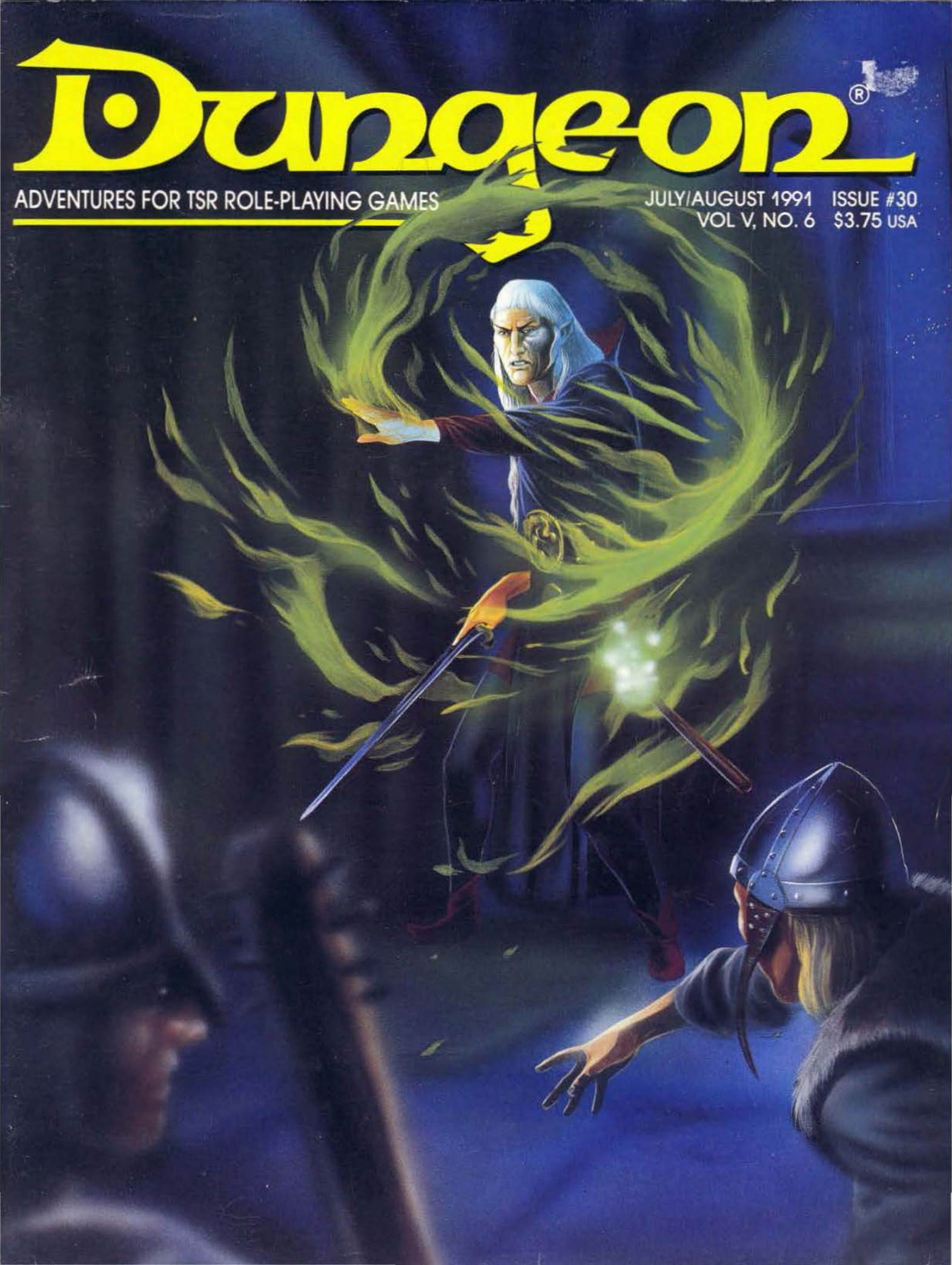

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COVER: Ancient magicks of a long-lost civilization come to light as adventurers discover "Thiondar's Legacy" in this issue's cover painting by Jim Holloway.

Another Year Older

With this issue, DUNGEON® Adventures completes its fifth year of publication. I find this rather hard to believe, since we were editing issue #4 when I began working with TSR's periodicals department, and it doesn't seem like I've been here that long.

In these past five years, we've published 148 adventures. If you subscribed at issue #1 and haven't missed any issues, you've paid about 59 cents an adventure, a real bargain no matter how you look at it.

The pages of DUNGEON Magazine have featured the work of 89 authors, *only three of whom were TSR employees.* All the rest of our authors are gamers like you, people who possess vivid imaginations and a knack with the written word. We read every proposal and adventure that arrives in our office (unless, Heavens forbid, you forget to include a self-addressed stamped envelope), and every submission is judged on its merits, not the prior publication credits of its author.

I also want to thank our many artists, whose illustrations give life to the authors' words and whose cover paintings reach out and urge you to buy this magazine. Our issues would be very dull without their work. In particular, we count on TSR's Dave LaForce (Diesel) to provide the cleanly drawn maps that are so essential to proper adventuring. Any mapping errors that have slipped into print are the fault of the editor (who, after all, is responsible for checking such things).

As we start our second five years of publication, here's my list of what I'd like to see: More authors and artists from the ranks of our readers. More D&D® game adventures, particularly those taking advantage of the newly published Basic Game boxed set. More solo adventures, both one player/one DM and "no DM required" types. More low-level (1-4) and high-level (9+) AD&D® adventures. More letters from our readers, letting us know what you like about DUNGEON Adventures and what you don't like.

This issue's quote was sent in by Ben Leeb III. Ben, please get in touch with us; we've lost your address.

Barbara G. Young

Vol. V, No. 6

PUBLISHER: James M. Ward
EDITOR: Barbara G. Young
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Roger E. Moore
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Dale A. Donovan
ART DIRECTOR: Larry W. Smith
CARTOGRAPHER: Diesel
TYPESETTING: TSR Graphic Art Services
SUBSCRIPTIONS: Janet L. Winters

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Whoever fights monsters should see that in the process he does not become a monster.

Friedrich Nietzsche

LETTERS

Latin Lesson

Hi! I wanted to write to tell you that you're still going strong. Congratulations are in order for the writers of "A Hitch in Time" (Willie Walsh, issue #24), "Tallow's Deep" (Steve Gilbert and Bill Slavicek, issue #18), and "House of Cards" (Randy Maxwell, issue #19). I must also compliment you on issue #29. Homage is due to Randy Maxwell for "Ex Libris," and of course to the people who made the "moving map" possible. What does "ex libris" mean? I know it's Latin; "old book" or something?

Please print my whole address, in case someone in Ontario is looking for a few good players. Thanks.

Jay West
37 Finchley Cres.
Bramalea, Ontario
Canada L6T 3P5

"Ex libris" is Latin for "from the books" but is usually translated as "from the library of." This phrase is frequently seen on labels that individuals can paste into their books to insure their return when loaned to friends.

Pre-made Lifesaver

For those who say that putting premade modules into an existing campaign is like putting square pegs into round holes: In three campaigns I have DMed in the past year and a half, about 50% of the modules played were from your publication. Thank you for this lifesaver, especially the new "Side Treks" feature and long, good modules like "Out of the Ashes" [issue #17], "Thunder Under Needlespire" [issue #24], and the ingenious "Ex Libris" [issue #29].

No name or address given

Holding the Bag

In the 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, on page 164 under "Bucknard's Everfull Purse," there is no table. Do I have a bad copy? Can you please get me some information? Thanks.

Rich Patton
N. Charleston, South Carolina

We usually send such letters to DRAGON® Magazine's sage, but I've had this same problem myself. The solution, however, is easy. Turn to page 160 of the DMG. *The table labeled "Bag of Transmuting" is really the table for* Bucknard's everfull purse.

Water, Water Everywhere

I haven't been purchasing your magazine for very long (one year) and have just recently sent in my subscription form, but I do like what I see. The thing is, I've seen just about everything—dwarves, elves, goblins, illithids, Underdark adventures, and now spelljamming—yet I can't remember reading anything about deep-sea adventures. I know it would require a lot of high-level spells and expensive magical paraphernalia, and would probably come out as being more trouble than fun, but I would love to try such an adventure. Please see if you can come up with something for me, eh?

Charles W. Price
Charlestown, West Virginia

We've published quite a few deep-sea adventures, and several others that feature ships of one sort or another. You might try to find the following: "The Deadly Sea" (issue #3), "After the Storm" (issue #6), "Intrigue in the Depths" (issue #12), "The Wreck of the Shining Star" (issue #15), and "Whitelake Mine" (issue #18). It's definitely time to do another waterborne adventure; look for "The Lady Rose" by Steve Kurtz in an upcoming issue.

Gnomes on the Rocs

First off, I'd like to say that your magazine is one of the best pieces of literature published today. It is, to me as to hundreds of other DMs, the greatest asset to my campaign. Your new "Side Treks" feature and cardstock map tiles are great ideas, although I don't know how the latter can be worked into most adventures. How about miniature fold-ups, large full-color maps, or fold-up buildings?

Finally, to all adventure submitters: Armies of orcs, kobolds, and goblins are nice, but try different ideas such as chaotic gnomes on roc mounts, to surprise the PCs. If you print this letter, please print my full address.

Anthony M. Gosselin
RR 2, Box 3930 Fairfield St.
Oakland, Maine 04963

We hope that the map and fold-up characters for "A Wrastle with Bertrum" in this issue are just what you've been looking for.

Wildspace Wonders

I've been reading issue #28 and I love it. You finally printed a SPELLJAMMER™ adventure ["Visitors from Above"]. I have found the adventure to be very much to my liking and very easy to run. The author obviously knows the SPELLJAMMER game well and does a good job explaining it for those who don't know a lot about spelljamming.

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One last comment about your magazine: The cover art is awesome! All in all, it was one of the best issues in a while. Thanks.

Jason Lucsy
Williamsburg, Michigan

Almost-Perfect Module

You've finally done it, printed an almost-perfect dungeon adventure. I'm talking about "Night of Fear" by Mark Lucas in issue #28. Incredible! A low-level adventure for a minimum number of players, with the emphasis entirely on character and mystery!

I long ago grew bored with high-level adventures featuring flash and endless multitudes of monsters to cover up their lack of plot and character. I had even given up on DUNGEON Magazine for its lack of low-level adventures. You've restored my confidence and won back my patronage. Now, if I can figure out how to get those couple of issues I didn't buy . . .

I'm also interested in play-by-mail AD&D gaming. If anyone is interested in joining a campaign or starting a new one, please print my address so they may reach me.

Tom Morris
2854 Paseo Rio Way #25
Sacramento, California 95827

Mug Shots

Bonjour! I am a Canadian student completing a six-month exchange program with a French university. I recently came across this village (see photo) in Bretagne, between the cities of Vannes and St. Malo.

The village of Elven (pronounced el-van, as in "tan") is the site of a very impressive 14th-century dungeon, six stories high (Sorry, I was out of film and it was pitch black anyway). The interior is empty and chilly, filled only with the howl of the wind. Very interesting indeed for an AD&D game player!

Francois LaSalle
Poitiers, France

Careers in Gaming

Your magazine is great! I saw your magazine in a games store a little while ago, so I flipped through it. I was surprised at the quality and imagination of the modules in it. I am hooked! Chalk up another subscriber.

The mini-adventures are an excellent idea. I am always looking for time-fillers, party dawdling remedies, beginning-of-the-session action encounters, or just something weird. The mini-adventures fit the bill for all of the above, plus they give me ideas and are always useful for emergencies. I plan to submit a couple myself.

Finally, can you send me a copy of your writer's guidelines? I am currently investigating a career in game design but I'm stumped as to how to go about getting information about potential careers and market information in the gaming field. My university has little information, and the games stores I frequent suggested I write to you. So if you have any advice, I would greatly appreciate it.

Scott Inglis
North Vancouver, British Columbia

A quick survey of our game designers and editors turned up several former teachers, an engineer, a rock musician, a bank clerk, and a mental health counselor. It seems that no one actually sets out on a career in game design. They just happen to be in the right place at the right time. If you're serious about publishing games, here are some things you should do: 1. Have good writing skills. 2. Game a lot. Study how games work and what makes them enjoyable. 3. Get a normal job! 4. Start inventing your own games. 5. Pick out the game companies that produce the stuff you like best, then study their products and write for their submission guidelines. You can increase your chances to be chosen for this rewarding and lucrative (hah!) field by starting now *to write modules for DUNGEON Adventures.* Ω

. . . AND A DOZEN EGGS

BY RANDY MAXWELL

Alligators in the sewers? You should be so lucky!

Artwork by Robert Klasnich

Randy writes: "I have always found dinosaurs the most entertaining and most aggravating monsters to use in an adventure. They are fun because everyone knows what they are and likes them. They are aggravating because you just can't put them anywhere you want. Also, you generally can't use them with low-level PCs—unless you're trying to get rid of the PCs! This adventure places dinosaurs in an unusual setting and gives the DM a means for customizing dinosaurs for future use."

". . . and a Dozen Eggs" is an AD&D® adventure for 4-6 characters of levels 1-3 (about 11 total levels). Encounter 3, "Strange Interlude," works best with adventurers of levels 2-3 who have at least two silver or magical weapons. The adventurers may be of any race, alignment, or class, but a mixed party of cooperative players is recommended. The scenario takes place in the sewers of Waterdeep in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® fantasy setting. The DM will find game accessory FR1 *Waterdeep and the North* helpful in expanding and fleshing out the adventure, but it is not necessary for play. The adventure can be played successfully in an extensive sewer system under any city located in a temperate climate. The DM may also wish to interweave this module with a street-level city adventure for the purpose of allowing PCs to get firsthand knowledge of the city above and below ground.

Adventure Background

Phalantar's Philtres and Components in Waterdeep (#33 on the map of Waterdeep given in FR1) purchased a dozen dinosaur eggs from a band of adventurers recently back from the jungles of Chult. The eggs were intended for use as potion ingredients and were left in a warm laboratory overnight. Through sheer chance, the eggs had remained warm and undamaged on their long journey from the southern jungles. That night the eggs hatched, and 12 tanystropheuses escaped into the city sewers via the laboratory's garbage chute. Phalantar reported the incident immediately; not reporting it would certainly get him in trouble if the dinosaurs were to hurt someone (word would spread quickly about who had just purchased dinosaur eggs). Phalantar has offered a

reward of 500 gp for each living dinosaur or 100 gp for each dead one.

A crew from the Cellarers and Plumbers Guild was attacked that very night by a dinosaur. A hatchling, nearly 4' in length, surprised the crew while they were laying a large, heavy length of pipe. Burdened with the pipe and taken by surprise, the crewmen were unable to defend themselves immediately. One was killed and two were badly mauled by the creature.

The guild is not at all pleased about news of dinosaurs in the sewers. Guild members have enough creatures to contend with in the sewers without careless shopkeepers adding more. On news of the attack, the guild offers a reward of 200 gp (dead or alive) for the dinosaurs, to be paid in addition to Phalantar's reward.

For the Dungeon Master

The PCs in this adventure need not be simple bounty hunters. At the DM's discretion, the PCs may be a special crew hired by the Cellarers and Plumbers Guild to take care of such problems, or they may be an elite squad of troubleshooters belonging to the city Watch as a kind of S.W.A.T. team.

Entering the sewers is relatively easy and requires no permission from any authority. The PCs need only find one of the many shafts leading to the sewers below the city and climb down. The DM's map shows only the largest passageways of the sewers.

The passageways are of two types, primary and secondary, according to size. Primary passages are 20' wide, with 3'-wide railless walkways on both sides. Secondary passages are 12' wide, with a single 3'-wide ledge on one side (usually the more southerly or easterly). The countless smaller feeder pipes are not shown.

The DM's map is not drawn to scale; many features (such as the junction rooms and surface shafts) are distorted in size for clarity. The junction rooms marked on the map are typically 10' × 10' stone-walled cubicles, 20' high, with a sitting ledge near the ceiling. Gratings in the sewers are stout but often old and rusty. If the PCs attempt to force a way through the gratings, double all chances to bend bars. Gratings may be permanent or swing open when unlocked. Thieves suffer a −20% penalty on their ability to open locks because the locks are of massive construction and most are nearly rusted solid.

The air supply is good in the sewers, so PCs have little chance of suffocating. The tunnels are damp, dark, and dismal with little or no light, lots of echoing water-flow noise, and a terrible stench pervading the entire network. Excessive contact with sewer water (swimming, falling in, or any activity that results in someone's nostrils, mouth, eyes, ears, or wounds getting wet) necessitates a saving throw vs. poison to avoid catching a disease. Such a disease makes itself known after 2-24 hours, when the victim suffers the equivalent effects of a *cause disease* spell (debilitating version; page 209, 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*). A *cure disease* spell will cure this affliction.

If the PCs attempt to buy a map of the Waterdeep sewer system, they will find all such maps to be wholly false or terribly inaccurate. Those selling sewer maps may claim to be members of the Cellarers and Plumbers Guild (they aren't, of course). In fact, the guild never sells maps to the general public but is unable to stop those who sell fake maps of the underground ways.

The PCs may hire a Cellarers and Plumbers Guild member as a guide to the sewers. The cost of such a guide is 20 gp per day (in advance) and one full share of any treasure found or bounties collected. In addition, if any of the dinosaurs are found while using a guild member as a guide, the guild does not have to pay a reward. The guide will not engage in any fighting or carry provisions or equipment. If the PCs hire a guide, he will never venture out of the primary passages (see DM's map). For a small bribe (of not less than 5 gp), the guide will tell the PCs where a particular secondary passage leads (to a shaft to the surface, a junction room, a locked grating, etc.). However, the guide will not know where every passage leads and will sometimes be mistaken. If the PCs threaten or harm the guide, or use spells in an attempt to make the guide leave the primary passages, he will abandon the party as soon as possible. The PCs will thereafter be unable to hire a guild member for any amount of money.

Guide: AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; quarterstaff, knife. The quarterstaff can be used to probe the bottom of the sewer for various hazards.

The calendar used throughout this adventure is the Calendar of Harptos, located on page 6 of the *Cyclopedia of the Realms* (FORGOTTEN REALMS boxed set). DMs using a different calendar need only orient the adventure to the warm-weather days of mid-spring to mid-autumn.

The sewers of Waterdeep are extensive. It will take the PCs several weeks, at least, to completely explore the underground ways. Therefore, encounters can take place over a period of several months. The DM may wish to let the PCs start the adventure immediately or wait until the dinosaurs have grown somewhat before the PCs are made aware of the bounty offers. The PCs can even leave the adventure for a while and return to it after they resolve other troubles or return to Waterdeep. This gives the newly hatched dinosaurs time to develop and become larger and more difficult opponents.

The DM is free to have all encounters take place while the dinosaurs are still hatchlings or another desired age category (see the Dinosaur Table sidebar). If the PCs wait too long, however, it is unlikely that they will personally capture, kill, or recover all 12 dinosaurs. There are other bounty hunters looking for the dinosaurs, and crews from the Cellarers and Plumbers Guild may occasionally find and kill one. In addition, the sewers of Waterdeep hold many hazards, and the dinosaurs may fall prey to an assortment of dangers.

Each X on the DM's map marks the location of a dinosaur. The longer the PCs delay in finding a dinosaur, the older and more powerful it becomes (see Dinosaur Table sidebar). The tanystropheuses have a simple but effective hunting technique that works well in the sewers. These dinosaurs, regardless of age, lie in wait in the sewer channel, then suddenly rush forward when prey comes close. They blend in with the dark sewer and gain a +4 bonus to surprise rolls (+2 for silence and +2 for camouflage, as per Table 57, page 102, 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*.) A dinosaur continues to attack, either in the water or on the ledge, until either it or its victim is dead. Dinosaurs attack the nearest creature or PC and attempt to drag the victim off the walkway into the sewer. Any to-hit roll of 18 or more means the dinosaur has successfully

dragged a victim into the water. PCs wishing to help the victim must also enter the water. Once in the water, saving throws vs. poison to avoid disease must be made for both victim and rescuers. The dinosaur pursues victims only as long as they are within sight and only so long as they stay in the sewers. The creature will not venture out into the streets of Waterdeep. If the PCs escape a dinosaur, they may return later and find it in the same locale (the area has become the dinosaur's hunting ground or lair.)

Dinosaur Table

Age category: Due to the radical differences in the size and weights of different species of dinosaurs, ages are not given in years; only age categories are used. Obviously, the small compsognathus would reach its full adult size and weight long before the huge brachiosaurus.

Size: Multiply this number by the length and height of an adult dinosaur as given in the *Monstrous Compendium.* Note that weight is proportional to the cube of the height. A young dinosaur that is one-half adult size will have one-eighth ($1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2 = 1/8$) the adult's full weight.

Movement (MV): Multiply this number by the movement rate given in the *MC,* rounding all fraction up. For example: The movement rate of a ceratosaurus is 15; therefore, a hatchling would have a movement rate of 5 ($15 \times 1/3$). The number applies to all movement rates given for the dinosaur (swimming, climbing, flying, etc.).

Hit-die modifier: Multiply the creature's hit dice by this number, rounding all fractions up. Example: A tyrannosaurus has 18 HD, so its hatchling would have 2 HD ($18 \times 1/10 = 1.8$, rounded up). Any pluses to hit dice are unaffected and are added normally. THAC0 is adjusted accordingly; the tyrannosaurus hatchling would have a THAC0 of 19 instead of 5.

Combat modifier: This penalty is applied to the to-hit roll only.

Damage/attack (Dmg): Roll damage normally, then multiply by this number, rounding all fractions up. Example: A hatchling tyrannosaurus bites and scores a hit with one claw. The bite roll (5d8) shows 21 hp damage and the claw roll (1d6) shows 3 hp. These damage rolls are multiplied by 1/10 for 3 hp damage from the bite ($21 \times 1/10 = 2.1$, rounded up) and 1 hp damage from the claw ($3 \times 1/10 = .3$, rounded up).

Special Attacks/Defenses (SA/SD): Multiply this number by the number of damage dice done by a special attack or defense, rounding all fractions up. Example: A brontosaurus may rear up and come crashing down for 5d10 hp damage. A young brontosaurus would then inflict 3d10 hp damage using this attack ($5 \times 1/2 = 2.5$, rounded up). The numbers apply to only those attacks or defenses actually causing damage. Other special attacks and defenses must be dealt with individually by the DM. For example, a climbing or surprise ability may be used by any age category, while the ability to swallow a man-sized creature whole would likely require young adult status or greater.

XP value: The experience-point value must be figured individually for each dinosaur using Table 31: Creature Experience Point Values and Table 32: Hit Dice Value Modifiers on page 47 of the 2nd Edition *DMG.* The DM should use the new HD number for Table 31 modified by any of the dinosaur's special abilities listed on Table 32.

Age category	Size	AC modifier	MV	HD modifier	Combat modifier	Dmg	SA/SD
1 Hatchling	1/10	−3	1/3	1/10	−2	1/10	nil
2 Very young	1/4	−2	2/3	1/4	−1	1/4	1/4
3 Young	1/2	−1	1	1/2	nil	1/2	1/2
4 Young adult	3/4	nil	1	3/4	nil	3/4	3/4
5 Adult	1	nil	1	nil	nil	1	1
6 Old	1	+1	3/4	nil	nil	1 (+1)*	1 (+1)*

* The dinosaur is now an experienced fighter and has reached its maximum size. Therefore, damage from all attacks and defenses is increased by +1 per hit die.

The dinosaurs entered the sewers as hatchlings (see the Dinosaur Table) on the night of Mirtul the 15th. The DM must keep track of the passing days in order to use the proper statistics for the encounters.

Encounters between Mirtul the 16th and Kythorn the 1st use the following statistics:

Tanystropheus (hatchling): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 2, swim 6; HD 1+6; hp 11 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SZ S (3'-4'); ML 10; XP 35; MC (Dinosaurs) plus Dinosaur Table herein.

Encounters between Kythorn the 2nd and Midsummer use the following statistics:

Tanystropheus (very young): AC 7; MV 4, swim 12; HD 2+6; hp 15 (average); THAC0 17; Dmg 2-3; SA +2 bonus to surprise; SZ L (7'-10'); XP 120; other statistics as for hatchling.

Encounters between Eleasias the 1st and the 30th of Marpenoth use the following statistics (for encounters after Marpenoth 30th, see "Concluding the Adventure"):

Tanystropheus (young): AC 6; MV 6, swim 18; HD 3+6; hp 20 (average); THAC0 17; Dmg 3-6; SA +3 bonus to surprise; SZ H (15'-20'); XP 175; other statistics as for hatchling.

The PCs may find the following spells helpful in subduing the dinosaurs: *sleep, web, blindness, ray of enfeeblement, invisibility to animals, snake charm.* The *snake charm* spell works well against the tanystropheus, but once the creature reaches young adulthood and beyond, this spell requires a priest of higher and higher level to be effective. *Animal friendship* spells are ineffective because the dinosaur is not of animal intelligence. Using baited traps is also ineffective in the sewers; such traps tend to attract any number of creatures except the one wanted. If the PCs use baited traps, roll 1d8+1d12 and consult the Sewer Encounters sidebar to see what type of creature is attracted to the bait.

Random encounters happen quite often in the sewers. Roll 1d10 every hour PCs are in the sewers:

1-7 No encounter.

8-9 DM's choice of encounter. This encounter may be skipped, but if an encounter is used, roll 1d8+1d12 and consult the Sewer Encounters sidebar.

10 Roll 1d8+1d12 and consult the Sewer Encounters sidebar.

Set Encounters

The following encounters are keyed to locations on the map of the Waterdeep sewers, but the DM is free to relocate the action or change the statistics of the creatures encountered as desired. If the DM does not wish to use a particular encounter, he can disregard it and run a standard X encounter instead.

1. Steamed Mushrooms. This area is directly below a large laundry that constantly pours very hot, dirty, soapy water into the sewer. The soap scum has made the walkway slick and treacherous. Each PC must make a dexterity check once per turn to avoid falling while in this area, beginning immediately after the passage turns from due north to northwest (see DM's map for exact location). If a fall is indicated, the DM rolls 1d6:

1 PC falls for 1-2 hp damage.

2 PC takes no damage from fall but causes a great deal of noise. The noise is 75% likely to attract the attention of a wandering monster (roll on Sewer Encounters table).

3 PC falls against passage wall and takes no damage.

4 PC falls for no damage but drops or loses something of minor value in the sewer (the object is permanently lost without the use of magic to recover it; it should be useful but inexpensive and nonmagical in nature, such as a helm, a dagger, a lantern, etc.).

5 PC falls heavily on his own equipment or weapon for 1d4+1 hp damage.

6 PC falls into sewer, taking no damage, but must make a saving throw vs. poison to avoid disease.

When the PCs reach the area below the laundry, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You are carefully picking your way along the ledge of a secondary passage. The walkway is slick and slippery making the footing treacherous. The air is getting noticeably hotter and more humid. Small swirls of steam can be seen occasionally wafting up from the sewer channel.
>
> As you inch your way along the ledge, you notice the tunnel ahead is a dead end. The tunnel ceiling has partially collapsed, and the passage ends in what appears to be a forest of giant mushrooms. Through the un-

Sewer Encounters

(Roll 1d8+1d12)

2: **Giant leech** (1-10): INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 3, swim 3; HD 1; hp 5 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA drain blood; SZ S; ML 7; XP 65; MC.

3: **Ochre jelly:** INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 3; HD 6; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SD lightning bolt causes creature to divide into one or more smaller jellies; SZ M; ML 10; XP 420; MC (Oozes/Slimes/Jellies).

4: **Crystal ooze:** INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 1, swim 3; HD 4; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16; SA poison; SD immune to acid, cold, heat, fire-based attacks; SZ M; ML 10; XP 420; MC (Oozes/Slimes/Jellies).

5: **Bandits** (3-12): INT average; AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 4 (average); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 9; XP 15; leather armor, short sword.

6: **Fire beetles** (2-8): INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 7 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ S; ML 12; XP 35; MC (Beetle).

7: **Gray ooze:** INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 1; HD 3+3; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16; SA corrodes metal; SD immune to spells, fire-, and cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML 10; XP 270; MC (Oozes/Slimes/Jellies).

8: **Rot grub** (5-20): INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 1; HD 1 hp; THAC0 nil; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA automatic hit, kills host in 13 turns; SZ T; ML 5; XP 15; MC.

9: **Common rats** (4-80): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD ¼; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA bite forces victim to make saving vs. poison or catch debilitating disease (as per *cause disease* spell); SZ T; ML 4; XP 7; MC.

10: **Giant rats** (4-40): INT animal; AL N(E); AC 7; MV 12; swim 6; HD 1/2; hp 3 (average); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease (as per common rats); SZ T; ML 7; XP 15; MC.

11: **Giant centipede** (2-24): INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 15; HD 2 hp; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA poison; SZ T; ML 6; XP 35; MC.

12: **Large spider** (2-12): INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 6 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S; ML 7; XP 175; MC.

13: **Green slime:** INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 0; HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA turns living flesh to green slime in 1-4 rounds; SD immune to weapons and most spells; SZ S; ML 10; XP 120; MC (Oozes/Slimes/Jellies).

14: **Huge spider** (1-6): INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 11 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA poison, surprise; SZ M; ML 8; XP 270; MC.

15: **Cellarers and Plumbers Guild crew** (3-6): INT average; AL any; AC 10; MV 12, 0-level humans; hp 4 (average); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 9. This crew will be armed with pipes (treat as clubs), long crowbars (treat as quarterstaves), hammers, and daggers. They are accompanied by 1-3 hired **guards** (AL NG; AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 12; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; short swords, daggers).

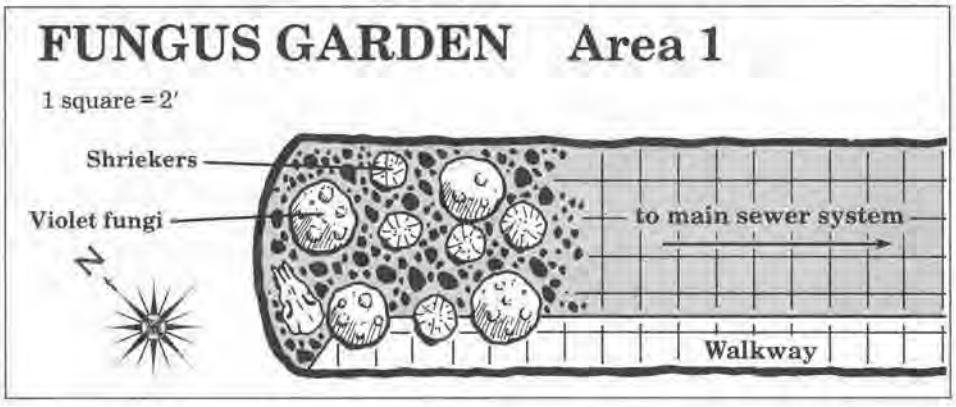
16: **Stirge** (4-16): INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 3, Fl 18 (C); HD 1+1; hp 6 (average); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA blood drain; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MC.

17: **Ghoul** (2-8): INT low; AL CE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 9 (average); THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; MC.

18: **Gelatinous cube:** INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 4; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA paralyzation, surprise; SD immune to electricity, *fear, hold, paralyzation, polymorph,* and sleep-based attacks; SZ L; ML 10; XP 975; MC (Oozes/Slimes/Jellies).

19: **Otyugh:** INT low-average; AL N; AC 3; MV 6; HD 6; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg1-8/1-8/2-5; SA grab, disease (90% chance per bite; 80% debilitating/20% fatal in nature, as per *cause disease* spell); SD never surprised; SZ M; ML 14; XP 650; MC.

20: **Shambling mound:** INT Low; AL N; AC 0; MV 6; HD 8; hp 35; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 2-16/2-16; SA suffocation; SD immune to fire, half damage from weapons, lightning adds 1 HD; MR special; SZ L; ML 18; XP 3,000; MC.



comfortably hot, humid air you can see a glint of white about 15' into the fungus garden. Looking more closely, you realize the glint comes from teeth in a fleshless skull—the skull of a dinosaur.

The PCs have found a collection of shriekers and violet fungi (see map). The hothouse atmosphere under the laundry is perfect for growing fungi, which feed well, especially in winter when unwary creatures attempt to escape the cold sewers by entering the warm tunnel. A dinosaur was stupid enough to chase a giant rat into their midst. Its skull is a testament to fungal efficiency.

Violet fungi (4): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 16; #AT 1-4; Dmg special; SA rots flesh; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; MC (Fungus). All the violet fungi are 5' tall with 2'-long branches.

Shriekers (5): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 16; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SD noise; SZ M; ML 12; XP 120; MC (Fungus). In the sewers, the shriek of a shrieker has a 75% chance (rather than the normal 50% chance) of causing some creature to investigate the noise (roll on the Sewer Encounters table).

If the PCs recover the skull, they can claim the reward for a dead dinosaur. Recovery of the dinosaur skull can be accomplished in a variety of ways: An *unseen servant* can be sent to retrieve it. An arrow with a line attached can be fired into the skull (normal to-hit roll for AC 10) and used to draw it out of the fungi. A long pole can hook the skull and bring it out. If the PCs recover the skull without engaging in combat with the fungi, the DM should give the party of bonus of 200 XP. If the PCs do not recover the skull by Elient the 30th, it is found and recovered by a crew from the Cellarers and Plumbers Guild on Higharvestide.

2. Trapped Trappers.

There is a confused shouting ahead of you. The sound is dim at first and difficult to locate precisely due to the echoing tunnels. As you approach, the yelling and screaming become more coherent. It seems to be a group of people engaged in combat with some creature.

Suddenly, you come upon the scene of battle. In a short, dead-end side passage, a small group of novice adventurers is locked in combat with a dinosaur, fighting the creature with torches and clubs. The wildly swinging torches cause the people and the dinosaur to appear and disappear as they pass suddenly from light to shadow. The flickering light gives the battle a bizarre shadow-puppet effect. From what you can see, the dinosaur appears to be winning the fight and slowly forcing its attackers back. Plainly, when the embattled men reach the end of the tunnel and can retreat no further, the dinosaur will have them.

The NPCs being attacked are novice bounty hunters. They were hunting dinosaurs when the hunters suddenly became the hunted. The dinosaur is intent upon his prey and has his back to the PC party (DM's option for size of dinosaur). If the PCs attack immediately, they win initiative automatically for the first two combat rounds. The creature then turns and attacks the party (roll initiative normally). If PCs wait to see the outcome of the battle with the NPCs, the dinosaur kills the bounty hunters quickly, then turns on the PCs (roll initiative normally). The creature regards this tunnel as its lair and will continue to attack until killed or subdued. It will not pursue the PC party if they retreat. Instead, it will turn again and attack (or eat) the NPCs. If the PCs retreat and return later, the dinosaur will be here, but no trace of the NPCs will be found.

Bounty hunters (3): AL CG, CN, N; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; torch, club, knife. The DM is free to create the names, personalities, and histories of each NPC as required.

The bounty hunters will be surprised by their sudden rescue (or rescue attempt) and will do nothing for 1d4 + 1 rounds. After this, if PCs have not yet subdued the dinosaur, the bounty hunters will join the battle and help as much as possible.

If rescued by the PCs, the NPCs will gladly forfeit any claim to the dinosaur bounty. If the PCs share the dinosaur bounty with them, the NPCs will serve the party as loyal henchmen. The DM, of course, has the final word on the NPCs. They can be used as henchmen for the PC party, kept as friendly NPCs for future use in Waterdeep, or behave in any way the DM wishes. If this encounter has not taken place by Marpenoth 30th, this dinosaur is captured by a mage using a *charm monster* spell. The mage refuses the bounties and claims the creature for his own. He soon leaves the city with the dinosaur—destination unknown.

3. Strange Interlude. The PCs are in some tavern or feasthall having dinner or a drink when they are approached by a man who appears to be a sailor. He wears studded leather armor and carries a dagger. This man, Pravus, is not what he appears to be. Pravus is actually a cleric of one of the beast-cults (see *Cyclopedia of the Realms*, page 16) who serves a rat god. Members of this order deliberately allow themselves to be afflicted with lycanthropy and become wererats.

Pravus has been using one of the dinosaurs to lure bounty hunters and adventurers into the sewers to rob them and use them as food for his wererat

minions and sacrifices to his rat god. He now hopes to do the same with the PCs.

Pravus Muridae: AL LE; AC 7 (6); MV 12; C4 (HD 3+1); hp 19; THAC0 18 (17); #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA spells (lycanthropy, harmed only by silver or magical weapons) ML 12; XP 650; MC (Lycanthrope, Wererat); spells: *cause fear, cause light wounds, curse, charm person or mammal, snake charm;* studded leather armor, scourge hidden in jerkin, dagger. Statistics in parentheses are for Pravus's wererat and ratman were-forms. Pravus will not summon giant rats in this scenario, though he may do so in future adventures. He cannot cast spells or wear armor in were-form, though his lycanthropy-causing abilities and immunity to normal weapons are active only in were-form.

Pravus asks if he might sit with the adventurers for a moment. If the PCs decline, he sits down anyway and begins speaking with a pronounced accent and a rambling style that is sometimes difficult to follow. He also smells rather off, as if he has been in the sewers recently.

"Aye lads, me name's Pravus. You be ready?"

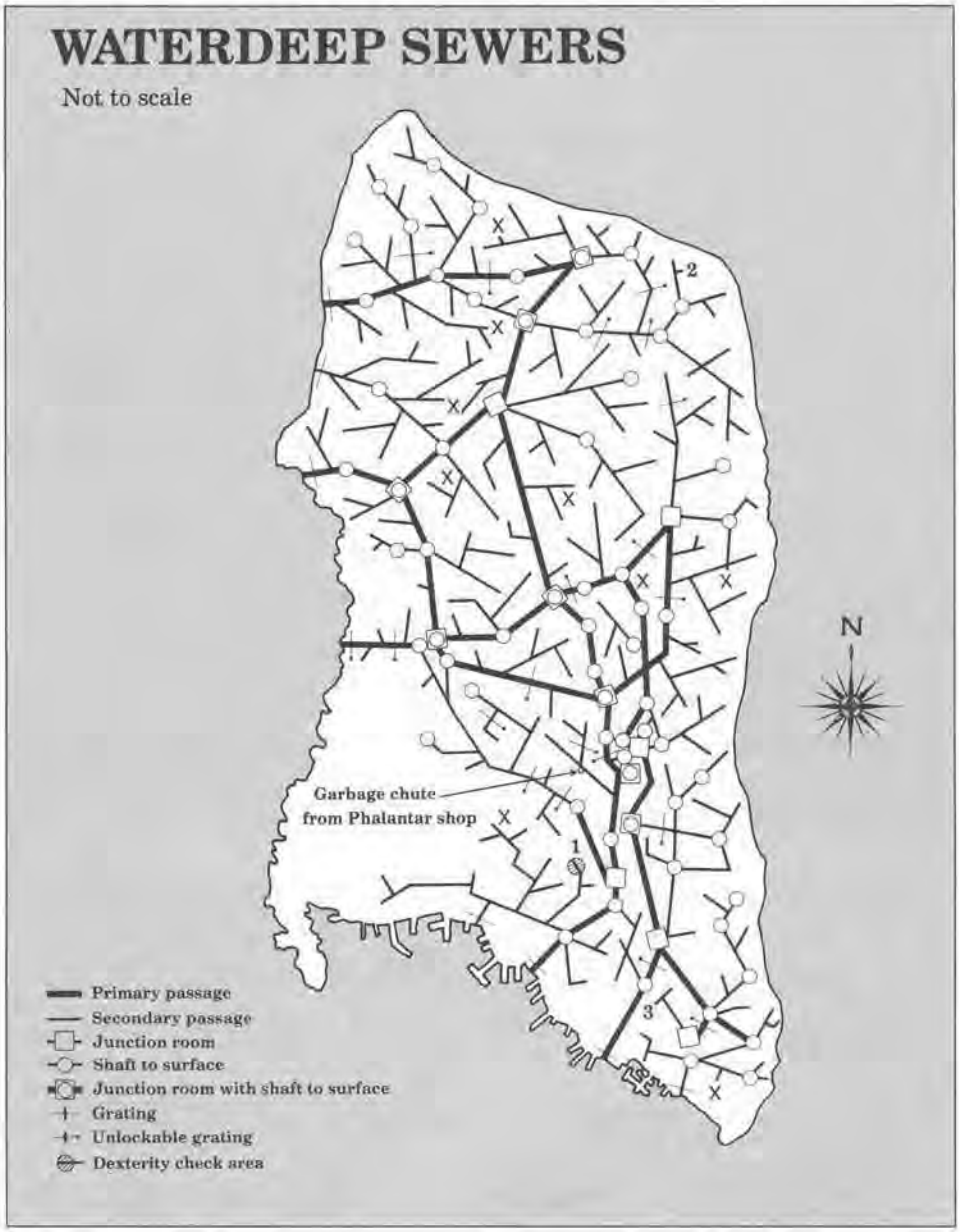
This is all he says for a moment and waits expectantly for an answer. If the PCs ask what it is they should be ready for, Pravus guffaws heartily and continues:

> "What else lads, what else? Fun under the town. Gol' just waiting to be put in yer 'and. And 'ere I be to leads you to it. All I gets is me fair share. What say you to that?"

He pauses expectantly again, waiting for an answer. If the PCs ask Pravus what in the Nine Hells he is talking about, the old sailor guffaws again, then continues:

> "The big lizards, lads, the big lizards. Undertown is where they be, and bounties on each and every 'ead of them. I knows where one be. I knows for sure, I knows. I knows where there be one of the dina-sours."

Pravus stops again and waits. If the PCs ask where the dinosaur is or how Pravus came by the information, or even if they don't say anything at all, Pravus soon continues:



> "See, it's like this lads. I be in an' out of the 'arbor a lot. The bully boys knows me and sometimes don't check as close as they ought. So, I brings in a bit o' this and a bit o' that. Mind you, nothin' serious, nothin' that does no 'arm. Just a wee bit o' fun the bully boys don't want folks 'avin'. Business like that don't get took care of in the open market. Me and me pals was doin' a bit o' the stock and trade down belowlike, when up comes this great lizard. We 'igh tailed it, I tell you! But now I knows where the beasty be, don't I? Me pals is all chicken and won't 'elp. They says the bounty ain't enough. They says it ain't worth it. But I says a few good lads is all that's needed. So 'ere I be an' there you be. If I shows you the beasty, will you splits the bounties with Pravus? Splits them fair, square, and where's my share?"

Pravus pauses again and waits for the PCs' answer. If PCs use *detect evil* or

know alignment spells, they will know that Pravus is of evil alignment. However, as Pravus has just explained, he is not exactly the most law abiding of citizens, this should not be too unexpected. If the PCs refuse his offer, Pravus attempts to wheedle agreement out of the PCs by lowering his price from a full share of the bounties to a half share. He suggests that he is in desperate need of cash and hints that, if certain gambling debts of his remain unpaid, his kneecaps are unlikely to remain sound and whole.

If the PCs agree, Pravus will want to personally show them the location of the dinosaur. If PCs balk at having Pravus come along, he will agree to draw them a map to the location. The map will be perfectly accurate.

If Pravus leads the PCs to area 3, read the following to the players (if the PCs are using a map, delete any mention of Pravus):

> You have entered one of the wider passages. It is blocked by a locked grating. Pravus explains that the lock is broken and, just for show, he pulls it down and it pops open with a loud click. He pushes on the grating and it slowly swings open with a grinding screech. After you pass through, Pravus closes the grating and puts the lock back in place. There is another loud click as he snaps the lock shut.

If the PCs become suspicious and demand to test the lock, Pravus stands aside with a shake of his head and says: "What a suspicious lot you lads be!" If the PCs try the lock, they find it is exactly as Pravus says. The lock can be pulled open with little effort.

> Shortly after passing the grating, you enter a junction room. Three giant rats bare their teeth as you enter. Before anyone can attack them, the rats think better of it and disappear up a nearby feeder pipe. On the northern side of the room, an archway leads into a smaller sewer channel.

The giant rats are actually wererats in league with Pravus. They have not gone up the feeder pipe to hide, but to fetch a real lock for the grating. Once the PCs have passed through the junction room, the wererats will transform themselves into human-sized ratmen and replace the phony lock with a real one. Once the real lock is in place, PCs attempting to retreat will be stopped at the grating until they can pick the lock or bend the bars. After switching the lock, the wererats stealthily follow the party. Due to the constant echoing of the water running through the sewer channels, nonthief PCs have only a 5% chance of hearing the wererats following them, and a thief's ability to detect noise is reduced by 10%.

Wererats (3): INT very; AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 3+1; hp 14 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA surprise; SD hit only by silver or +1 or better weapons; SZ S-M; ML 12; XP 270; MC (Lycanthrope, Wererat); short sword, dagger.

> Pravus waves you on through the opening in the northern wall of the junction room saying: "Just a wee bit further lads, just a wee bit more." You travel only a short distance when up ahead you see the passage ends at another cross channel.

At this point, Pravus stops and begins whispering to the PCs:

> "Now for it lads. She be up ahead and to the port side. That be to the left, you lan'lubbers. Mind you, make no noise. We don't want ol' beasty to knows we're comin'. I'll be for bringin' up the rear, if you don't mind. I've done me part and shown you where beasty be. I'll be leavin' the fightin' to you lads."

If the PCs peek around the corner, they see a young tanystropheus lying near the wall at the tunnel's end. Its back is to the PCs, and it appears to be sleeping. Whether the PCs charge the dinosaur or attempt to sneak up on the creature makes no difference. As soon as all PCs are in the same passage as the dinosaur, Pravus comes up behind the party and lets out a bloodcurdling yell. Instantly, the dinosaur leaps to the attack and just as quickly stops short. The dinosaur is chained to the wall by one leg and cannot get at the PCs. PCs were unable to detect the chain before because it is very short and the creature was lying on it. (If the PCs have followed a map here, Pravus is waiting in the northwest channel (see map) and comes up behind the party as above.)

The PCs turn to see Pravus standing with the three wererats. He stands staring at the PCs, while the wererats' eyes glitter malevolently in the gloom behind him. Pravus laughs loudly, then begins speaking. The accent is gone now, and he speaks in a quiet, sinister tone.

> "Not thinking of harming my little pet, are you? I'm afraid I can't allow that. You see, that thing is my bread and butter. And you, my friends, will soon be *its* bread and butter."

As soon as Pravus finishes speaking, the other wererats rush forward to attack while Pravus hangs back to cast spells before joining the battle. If the PCs retreat toward the **dinosaur** (hp 21, use young dinosaur statistics), it attacks them as soon as they come within range. If the PCs fight their way through the wererats or jump into the sewer channel and attempt to escape via the locked grating, they must either deduce on their own that the lock has been changed or the DM can use an Intelligence check to see if any character has figured it out.

The wererats pursue the PCs as far as possible but will not pursue into the streets of Waterdeep. Any PCs who surrender or are captured will be used as food for both the dinosaur and the wererats. If this encounter occurs within one week of a full moon, Pravus chooses one of the PCs to be his personal meal after he changes into wererat form. The DM has the option of having Pravus and the wererats ransom one or more of the PCs. The wererats will use deceit and trickery in this and attempt to obtain the ransom without releasing the PCs.

If any of the PCs escape, Pravus will use his *snake charm* spell on the dinosaur. While the dinosaur is under the *charm*, the wererats are able to bind it. Pravus and the wererats then move the creature to a new location and use it to lure other bounty hunters to their deaths. If the PCs return to this spot after escaping, they will find absolutely nothing here.

If the battle turns against Pravus and the wererats, they immediately dive into the channel and escape via the locked grating. The wererats can get through the grating easily in their giant rat form. Pravus can get through because he has the key to the lock in his pocket. Pravus will lock the grating behind him in order

to gain time to escape deeper into the sewers. If Pravus and the wererats escape into the sewers, the PCs will be unable to find them or their lair. Pravus and his cronies know the sewers well and can escape the PCs through secret ways not marked on any map. If Pravus or any wererats are captured, they can be turned over to the city Watch to be tried and executed for murder.

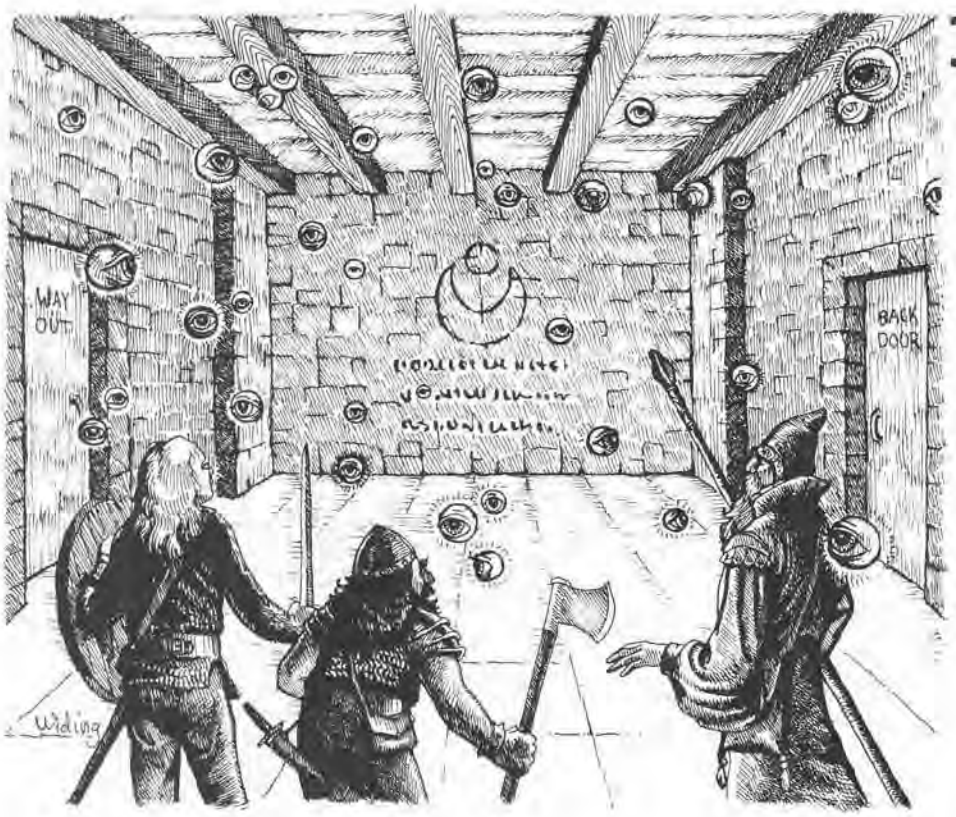
If Pravus and his band are killed or driven away, the dinosaur should be easy pickings for the PCs. As it is chained to the wall, it can neither escape nor attack. The PCs need only kill or subdue it to collect the reward.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs will have no difficulty collecting the bounties due them. The Cellarers and Plumbers Guild will immediately pay cash on the barrelhead upon proof that the PCs have killed or captured a dinosaur. If the PCs prefer, Phalantar is willing to pay his share of the bounty in potions, oils, and elixirs rather than gold pieces. Not every potion listed on Table 89: Potions and Oils on page 135 of the 2nd Edition *DMG* is necessarily available from Phalantar. The DM should make his own list of potions, thereby eliminating those he doesn't wish to use in his campaign or does not want the PCs to obtain at this time. Any potions given in lieu of a bounty will be of the approximate gold-piece value as the bounty (see "Potions," page 87 of the 2nd Edition *DMG* for details on pricing potions).

As the exact number of dinosaurs in the sewers is known, the adventure is over when all 12 are either killed or captured. Any dinosaurs left unaccounted for are automatically eliminated by the cold weather of winter. As the sewer system of Waterdeep is a fairly open tunnel network, and as cold air tends to sink, there is a constant cold downdraft into the sewers during the fall and winter months. Though the sewers seldom freeze, these lower temperatures cause cold-blooded creatures (like dinosaurs) to become torpid and lethargic. They become unable to protect themselves properly from the myriad of hungry predators stalking the dismal passages and are soon devoured. Therefore, after the cold weather late in the month of Marpenoth and the freezes in the month of Uktar, any dinosaurs still unaccounted for will be presumed dead, and all bounties are rescinded on the last day of Uktar. The dinosaurs will not mate until they reach Young Adult status or older and, due to the winter, none reach this age. Therefore, the city need not worry that there are dinosaur eggs somewhere in the sewers just waiting to hatch out a new brood to trouble the citizens.

If the PCs have taken the dinosaur from Pravus and the wererats, they may be in for trouble in the future. Pravus is not a kindly soul and will hold a grudge against the PCs for a long time. If the PCs stay in Waterdeep, Pravus and his band might well cause them a good deal of mischief. The wererats might steal the spell book of a wizard PC or some other valuable magical item or weapon from the adventurers. The PCs would then be forced to enter the sewers again to retrieve the item. A more complicated scenario can involve Pravus stealing something extremely valuable from one of the Lords of Waterdeep and surreptitiously placing it in the PCs' possession. Naturally, the PCs are accused of the theft. They must somehow avoid arrest, enter the sewers, and find Pravus to prove their innocence. Ω



ELMINSTER'S BACK DOOR

BY ED GREENWOOD

Visiting an archmage? Better come in by the *front* door!

Artwork by Ken Wilding

Ed is the creator of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting and the author of many TSR modules and accessories, including the "super-dungeon" boxed set, The Ruins of Undermountain.

This AD&D® adventure takes place in the pastoral farming community of Shadowdale, in the Inner Sea lands of the Forgotten Realms. It explores a back way into the small, ramshackle tower of the famous archmage Elminster.

The tower itself is featured in several novels set in the Realms and is partially mapped on page 102 of *The Forgotten Realms Atlas.* Full interior maps of the Old Mage's home will be revealed in a future TSR adventure. It is a squat, three-story stone tower, shaped like a cone with the pointed top lopped off, and a little one-story shed (the kitchen) stuck on the back. The tower's single door faces south and is reached by a flagstone path from the main east-west road through Shadowdale. The tower stands with the rocky Old Skull knoll at its back and a small, placid pond to the west. Beyond this pool are the meadows of the Twisted Tower, and beyond that the Tower of Ashaba itself.

Few folk notice Elminster's little abode, save those who come looking for it. Some wish to reach it unseen—and for them, the Old Mage has provided a "back door." If they come as enemies, this back way in may prove almost as dangerous as marching up to the front door to challenge Elminster himself!

The back door is a stiff challenge for player characters of any class and level who act wrongly, but can be a cakewalk for a lone 1st-level character who does the right things along the way. Assuming a party of six PCs, in which all major classes are represented, the back door can seriously harm PCs averaging 8th level if they're hotheaded vandals who trigger just about everything. If the party includes powerful characters (such as a mage of 18th or greater level, or a psionicist), the challenges given here should be increased. One way of doing this is by using "The Haunted Option" given in the sidebar.

Little used by the Old Mage these days, this back route is a classic example of wizardly paranoia, typical of many sorcerer-lair gantlets all over the Realms (DMs can adapt it, scrambling elements given here and adding new perils, for use with any wizard's tower, castle, or even hut). Among wizards of

power, such gantlets are the rule. The tower of many a wizard doesn't have a front door, or any visible door at all. If one can't use secret knowledge to find a way in and past traps and guardians, or fly up to a window (and evade its defenses), one faces only unyielding stone.

"Deliveries (and Adventurers) Use Rear Door"

One finds Elminster's back door, accidently or on purpose, by stepping on an unguarded square of flagstones. These lie open to the sky at a certain spot at the foot of the rocky knoll known as the Old Skull: a spot surrounded by bushes, a comfortable rustic bench, and two boulders. These large rocks each bear the zig-zag warning runes that means "Magic Here" and the Harper marks for "Dangerous Place" and "Dangerous Magic Here." This square of flagstones is just out of sight of the tower, to the east. Cut deeply into one of the flagstones is the crescent-and-circle sigil of Elminster.

If nonliving (or undead) objects or beings touch the flagstones, nothing happens. Magic directed at the stones is absorbed without effect. If a living being touches any flagstone and immediately utters the word "Please," he is *teleported* to The Room Beyond (area I) without incident, bypassing all the traps and guardians of the back door.

If a being touches a flagstone without saying "Please," nothing happens—unless the flagstone touched is the one bearing Elminster's sign. If this flagstone is touched, struck, or moved in any way (even with a tool or other device), the being disturbing it is *teleported* to the entry chamber (area A), minus any worn, carried, or touched items that bear a magical dweomer. These are whisked away by separate *teleport object* spells developed by Elminster (not detailed here) to a spell-shielded cellar room connected via tunnel to the tower, parting company from their former owner without damage. Sentient items, such as talking swords, also go to this cellar, but living beings who are under any enchantment at the time (including willingly adopted spells) go instead to the Entry Chamber.

A. Entry Chamber. This 60′ × 60′ room has a single closed, unlocked stone door. A being who says the phrase "the moon and nine stars" while in this room is instantly *teleported* to The Room Beyond (area I). This is the intruder's last chance to avoid the perils of the back door. Any entry into this room causes an alarm gong to sound in the tower's kitchen. Lhaeo (Elminster's cook and scribe) may use magic to spy on and converse with intruders. If they are welcome, he may tell them the pass phrase at this point.

The chamber and all later areas of the back door complex are constructed of well-fitted stone blocks, have 12′-high ceilings, and contain swarms of floating, faintly luminescent eyeballs. These moving groups of orbs (there are 10d10 "eyeballs" in each area) swivel to watch all movements, blink from time to time, and move around freely. They are in fact unseeing, magically animated, sculpted-rubber orbs that serve to discomfit intruders and to provide cover for any visible "eyes" created to watch intruders. *Dispel magic* spells cause the eyes to sink to the floor, their radiance gone, for one round per level of the caster.

The door out of the entry chamber bears a *Leomund's trap* spell, placed to reveal the thiefly talents of intruders. The door opens into a 50′-long hallway, lit only by its cloud of drifting eyes.

B. Hallway. This 50′-long passage runs to another closed stone door. Anyone entering from the entry chamber activates a *dispel magic* spell (governed by one of Elminster's specialized spell triggers) that fills the first 10′ of the corridor (shaded area).

A second such effect is activated whenever any being approaches within 10′ of the exit door. Anyone going from the entry chamber down this hallway to area C is affected by two *dispel magic* effects, one after the other. This often removes illusory disguises, *charms*, and the like that are in effect on intruders.

The door at the end of the hallway is unlocked. Whenever it is touched, a bearded *magic mouth* appears on it and says, "You have blundered into a most dangerous place. If you would get out with no more trouble, take the left-hand door, beyond this one."

C. The Room of Doors. This 30′ × 30′ room has doors in the center of three of its four walls. The wall without a door bears the sigil of Elminster and the words "Elminster the Sage. Magical Matters Dealt With. No Hostile Visitors, Please."

Beings entering this room from area B come face to face with this message. The door on their left bears the inscription "Way Out," and the door on the right bears the legend "Back Door." The inside surfaces of all the doors in this room (the sides that face into the room when the doors are closed) give off a vivid ruby-red radiance when (and as long as they are) touched by beings of any evil alignment.

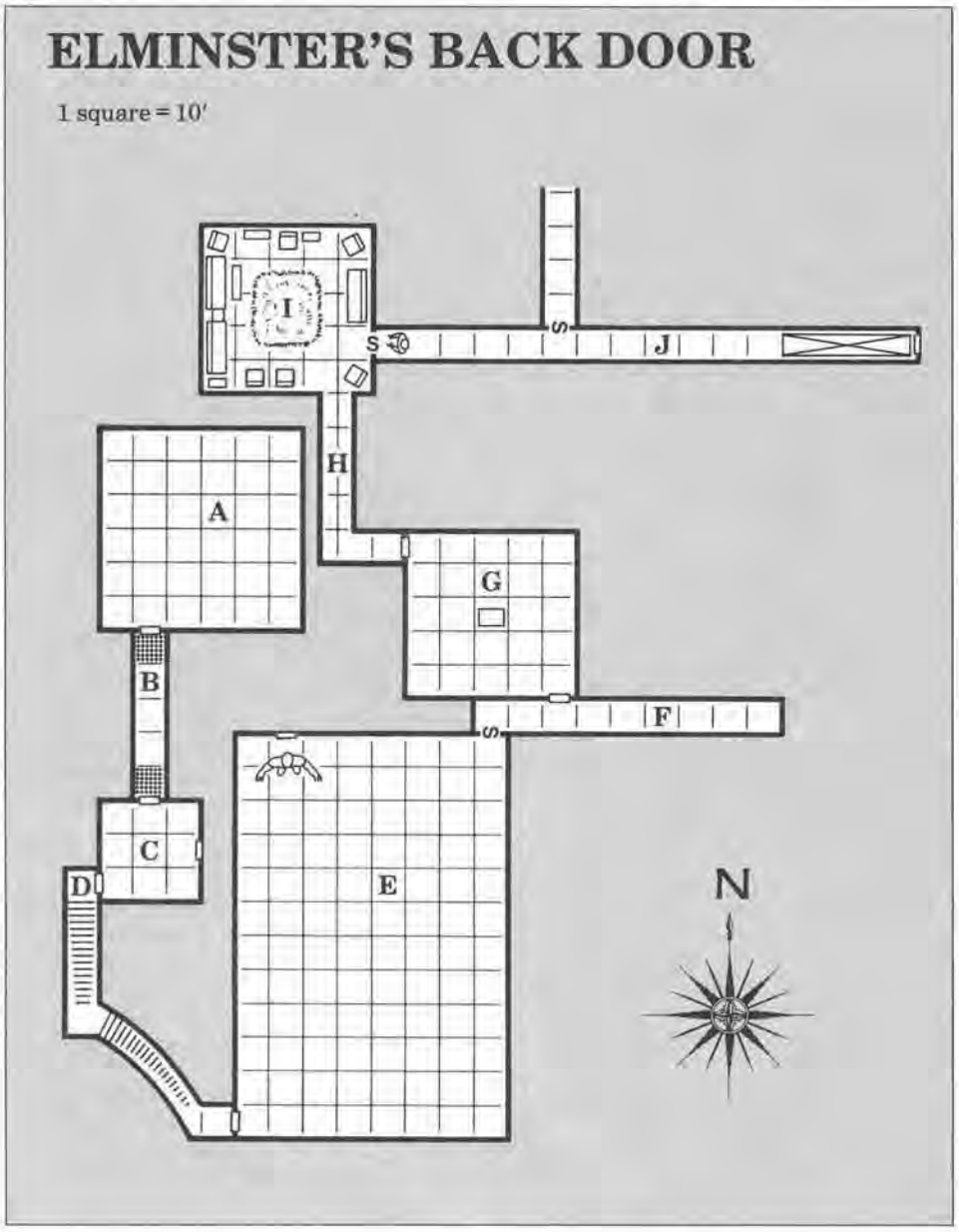
Anyone opening the left door sees an (illusory) ascending stone stairway lit by rows of torches. If any part of a person's body passes through the door frame, he is instantly *teleported* to the surface—specifically, onto the rustic bench near the entry flagstones (unless it is occupied, whereupon he appears right in front of it). The person who leaves in this manner may try to enter the back door complex again, by touching flagstones as described earlier, or is free to explore safer areas of Shadowdale.

The right door leads onto a quite real 10′ × 10′ landing at the top of a descending flight of stairs.

D. The Stairs. A steep flight of 40 stone steps descends to a landing, from the left side of which a second flight goes down another 40 steps to a closed door. Many eyes float near the sloping

The Haunted Option

The rapacious and desperate alike are warned that Elminster's back door is rumored to be haunted by the deranged remnant of a powerful wizard who tried to attack Elminster via this route long ago, and who ended up being transformed by one of his own spells. This wizard (of at least 20th level) can be met in any shape and may have any spells the DM desires. If the DM has access to Volume 7 of the *Monstrous Compendium*, the first SPELLJAMMER™ appendix, it is suggested that this mad wizard, Malgrik Ashamber, be encountered as a wizshade. His behavior will be completely unpredictable—dangerous, but not necessarily always hostile.



ceiling, which is cut into ledges and hollows.

These ledges are home to 26 **burbur,** which Elminster has bred and magically augmented. These creatures look like normal burbur—ivory-hued, soft-bodied worms with large, glistening black eyes and a sucking tube mouth—except that these burbur fly by means of translucent wings and have the ability to *neutralize poison* (as the fourth-level priest spell) by their touch.

Burbur (26): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 12, fly 16 (A); HD 1−1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (bite affects slimes, molds, and mosses only); SD immune to effects of all poisons, slimes, molds, and mosses; SZ T (6" long); ML 20 (Elminster's magic has rendered these creatures fearless and aggressively inquisitive); XP 65 each; MC.

The burbur swarm about all intruders, biting and crawling. They can sense gases, liquids, and pastes that are poisonous to humans, and can smell green slime, yellow musk, mold spores, and similar harmful plants (their favorite foods). They will seek out such things and bite at them. As many as 20 burbur can bite at the belongings of an unarmored man in a round; armor reduces attack chances to a maximum of seven. The burbur will not cease their inquisitive dartings and crawlings into packs, purses, and pockets until intruders leave the stairs.

The wall of the middle landing that faces the uppermost flight of steps grows a bearded *magic mouth* whenever any being approaches within 20'. The mouth says, "It really might be wiser to turn back now. Take the Way Out. Please."

E. Grand Hall of the Golem. The closed door at the foot of the stairs is unlocked and leads into a huge, high-ceilinged hall with a smooth-polished floor, many floating eyes, and a bright *continual light* radiance. The 80' × 120' room (its ceiling is 60' up) has only one other visible door, but this is partially hidden by a motionless stone figure—a roughly chiseled statue of a manlike being with the crescent sigil of Elminster on its chest above the words "Door Knocker. Turn Back." The massive statue stands in front of the door at the far end of the room, arms spread.

The stone figure turns its head to watch the movements of intruders but takes no action unless attacked (whereupon it will try to destroy all intruders) or an evil-aligned creature tries to pass it.

"Knocker," stone golem: INT non; AL N; AC 5; MV 6; HD 14; hp 60; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3-24; SA can cast *slow* spell every other round on any opponent within 10', can *detect evil* within 20'; SD immune to all except +2 or better magical weapons, healed by *mud to rock* spells, *slowed* 2-12 rounds by *rock to mud* spells, rendered vulnerable to all attacks for one round by *stone to flesh* spell; SZ H (16' tall); ML 20; XP 10,000; MC (Golem).

The closed door at the far end of the room is a dummy, opening onto solid stone. Intruders must search the room for the secret door that leads on to area F.

F. The Passage. The secret door opens into one end of a dark, straight hallway running off to the right some 90'. Twenty feet along the hall, there is a closed stone door in the opposite wall. At the end of the hallway is a glowing sphere of light, perhaps the result of a *dancing lights* spell. It floats above the pages of a book that a bearded, impressive-looking old man is reading as he sits in an old, shabby armchair, smoking pipe in hand.

The old man, recognizable as Elminster, looks up briefly to fix intruders with a steady eye before returning to his book. He will not speak and will ignore all intruder speeches and actions because he's really a *programmed illusion* combined with Elminster's own unique magical processes. Any being who attacks "Elminster" with a spell, magical item, or weapon is *paralyzed* for 5-20 rounds (save vs. spells at −4 to avoid). Those not in contact with the image (which is not destroyed by any attack) are struck by arcing blue bolts that emanate from the image, thus causing the *paralysis*. There is nothing solid at the end of the passage: no chair, no book, no pipe, no light, and no wizard. Any spells cast at the image are absorbed harmlessly (used to power its further existence) but cause a loud, world-weary sigh to be heard in the passage.

G. The Chamber of the Sword. The closed stone door 20′ along the passage is unlocked. The 50′ × 50′ room beyond is entered at one corner; a closed stone door is visible in the opposite corner.

This room is lit by the flickering flames of eight torches (two per wall) held by sconces that look like blue-fleshed, long-fingered human hands projecting from the walls.

A plain, 6′-long table stands at the center of the room. From the tabletop project more blue hands, two holding up a scabbarded long sword, another grasping a foot-long tapering stick of wood, and a fourth clutching a thick book. Faint, flickering amber radiances play about the sword.

If intruders pass by the table without touching any of these "magical" items (they are worthless wooden carvings cloaked with illusions), nothing occurs in this room. Any spell attack on the table or items, or any attempt to take or move an item, causes the blue hands to attack: the four bounding from the tabletop, the eight on the walls hurling torches (a hit does 2-5 hp fire damage). An additional 18 hands swarm up from where they cling in hiding to the underside of the table.

These 30 blue hands are crawling claws that have been altered by Elminster's magic. They retain flesh, as in life, and turn back all spells cast at them as a *ring of spell turning* does. They are otherwise identical to regular crawling claws.

Crawling claws: (30) INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 9 (bound 15′); HD ½; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (armored foes), 1-6 (unarmored targets); SD immune to turning and holy water effects, edged weapons do only half damage; MR 100% (as a *ring of spell turning);* SZ T (6″ long or less); ML 20; XP 120 each; MC. Magical weapons do only normal, nonmagical damage to these special crawling claws, though attack bonuses still apply. If these hands get hold of intruders' weapons and items (such as magical rings), they will employ these against their former owners.

H. Passage of Lightnings. The unlocked door opening out of the Chamber of the Sword leads into this L-shaped passage, which turns to the right some 20′ along its run.

The walls of this passage are adorned with many raised carvings: stone shields as tall as a man, adorned with forgotten, crumbling heraldic arms. They are blackened, and the air in this passage has a sharp, acrid odor. As the first intruder sets foot in this passage, the reason for these traces of activity becomes immediately apparent: vivid, crackling bolts of purple-white magical energy leap and dance from shield to shield in a latticework of energy discharges. The bolts blaze about the passage for a few seconds, then cease. A few seconds later, they come again.

These bolts are merely illusions and can be walked through without harm—but also without dispersing them. They are here merely to waste the spells of wary intruders.

After its bend, the passage runs straight on for 40′ to an archway that opens into a cozy, warmly lit room.

I. The Room Beyond. This 50′ × 50′ room is lit by a gentle, warm *continual light* radiance that shines around the edges of a suspended ceiling (the spell was cast in the empty space above the ceiling, which is a plaster-coated wooden platform hung from the walls by four massive corner chains; any spell that brings the ceiling down results in 2-8 hp impact damage—plus possible flame damage, if the wood has been ignited—to all in the room under it). There are no visible doors or other exits from this room except the passage by which the intruders enter.

The room contains old, worn, very comfortable furniture: sofas, armchairs with footstools, side tables, cuspidors, and some paintings. This art is magical; the scenes constantly shift and change, flowing smoothly from a view over a rainswept moor to a rocky crag outlined by moonlight, to dappled, sun-drenched woods. A few breaths later, the scene shifts to show a ruined castle keep, somewhere in mountainous terrain, and then views some dusty, busy bazaar in the hot lands of the Shining South. The places are all real, but the views are not up-to-the-minute observations of what's really occurring (although they may by chance reveal something of interest or importance), and what the paintings show can't be controlled.

If attacked, these paintings can readily be destroyed; they have no special magical defenses. If a painting is touched or taken off the wall, its scene instantly shifts to a black void in which float two menacing, alert eyeballs that shift to watch the action around them (therefore, an intruder who takes a painting off the wall will find two eyes staring accusingly at him).

A sideboard in this room contains cheeses, a cutting knife, pickles, sausages, a keg of ale and mugs, ornate wine glasses, and decanters of wine. All of this provender, intended for guests kept waiting here, is safe, hearty fare of the finest quality.

A sleek, regally beautiful lady in a long gown reclines on one of the sofas. She rises, greet intruders in a friendly manner, introduces herself as Ilsheen, and offers refreshments. All of her movements are graceful and silent.

Ilsheen is kind, a good listener, and chatty; she asks intruders their names and business, and tries to make them comfortable. If she deems them important or interesting enough, she excuses herself, advising the intruders not to leave this place, for their own safety. She goes to get Lhaeo or Elminster himself—by the simple means of walking to the nearest wall and passing through it! (She will use this means to escape destruction, fleeing before she is destroyed by strong and persistent intruders; see details at left).

J. The Hall of the Fall. There are no visible doors out of The Room Beyond (area I). If intruders search the walls, Ilsheen issues a warning but does not bar the way. The secret door is not locked and opens to reveal a long, dark, straight passage.

Just beyond the door, a huge dark figure stands blocking the way. If the intruders advance, Ilsheen warns them again against proceeding; then, if she is still capable, she attacks the party from behind.

Ilsheen will never betray the door's presence or drift through its location

Ilsheen (Watchghost)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any land
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	14
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful good
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	1
MOVEMENT:	9, Fl 9 (C)
HIT DICE:	7+2 (49 hp)
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-16 (flesh-corroding chilling touch)
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Chill ray (1/round, 9/hour)
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to turning, wraithform, pass through stone
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	44%
SIZE:	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	20
XP VALUE:	5,000

Ilsheen is a watchghost, a rare sort of undead being described in *The Ruins of Undermountain*. DMs need not refer to the full monster entry there, however, because she is not typical of her type, having been altered by Elminster's magic.

Her *chill ray* (a ray of cold light leaping from a finger to a single target) can penetrate any magical protections and barriers of less than 6th level, and strikes with a THAC0 of 6. It has a maximum range of 90'. A victim of the ray must save vs. death magic or be struck down, suffering 2-24 points of energy-draining, chilling damage and falling into a slumber that can be ended only by a *dispel magic* spell or by the passage of 22 turns minus one turn for each of the victim's levels.

Against spell attacks, Ilsheen has the standard undead immunities to *charm, sleep, hold,* and the like, including all poison, petrification, polymorph, cold-based, and death-magic attacks. Against all other spells, apply her magic resistance; if the resistance fails, she suffers normal effects.

Ilsheen can by will and gesture cause all items within 60' that bear a dweomer to glow with a cold white radiance. This glow can be quelled by a *dispel magic* spell but otherwise lasts 2-8 turns.

Watchghosts can become wholly or partially insubstantial. In this state they can deal no damage but suffer none from purely physical attacks. Magical weapons passing through Ilsheen's wraithlike form do damage equal to twice their normal damage bonuses—a *sword +2,* for example, would inflict 4 hp damage. Ignore the normal dice of damage done by the weapon, unless it is a magical weapon with no bonus. In that case, it does its maximum normal damage: a magical sword that normally does 1-8 hp damage wounds Ilsheen for 8 hp damage per strike. A nonmagical sword, however, whistles right through her, doing no damage at all.

In wraithform, Ilsheen can pass through solid stone or earth without pause, and can fight in the round in which she enters or leaves. She can lurk within the stone walls—with only her eyes, nose, and fingertips protruding—and reach out to grapple passing intruders. She need not breathe, eat, drink, or sleep.

in the wall. Even if the intruders destroy her, they still hear her ghostly voice warning them at this point.

If Ilsheen does not welcome intruders to the home of Elminster as she ushers them through the secret door into this hall, the dark figure will attack, trying to stop any intruder from passing.

Gigur, iron golem: INT non; AL N; AC 3; MV 6; HD 18; hp 80; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 4-40; SA none (see below); SD edged weapons do half damage, *anti-magic shell;* SZ H (20' tall); ML 20; XP 15,000; MC (Golem).

This iron guardian, modified by Elminster's magic, has no poisonous breath attack but radiates a 20'-radius spherical *anti-magic shell* for one turn, beginning when the secret door is opened. This shell is identical in effect to the spell, preventing all magical attacks and effects within its confines (magically animated beings, such as the golem itself, can still function, and magical items act as normal weapons doing purely physical damage). Gigur is vulnerable to all weapons but takes only half damage from cutting and piercing attacks.

Beyond Gigur the hallway runs onward, lit only by a few stray watching eyes. A secret door in the north wall partway down the passage leads into the cellar of Elminster's tower. Intruders who find this door and pass through meet either an annoyed Elminster—described in FR7 *Hall of Heroes*—or, in his absence, hastily assembled members of the Knights of Myth Drannor (also in *Hall of Heroes).* For DMs who lack this reference work, the intruders may be met by any apprentice or visiting colleague who happens to be in the tower (that is, any powerful NPC mage the DM wishes to use).

Intruders who miss the secret door proceed down the dark hallway, which seems to end in another closed stone door.

The door is fake; the last 40' of the hallway in front of it is actually a large pit trap. When any intruder approaches within 10' of the door, the 40'-long stretch of stone floor suddenly folds downward, spilling intruders down a 60' drop for 6d6 hp damage.

The floor then closes again, forcing survivors to grope around in a natural cavern lit only by the wan radiance of a few lonely watching eyes. The cavern leads (by way of a long, rough-floored crawl tunnel 4' in diameter) to the surface, exiting in a tangle of saplings near the back of The Old Skull Inn, which is just east down the road from Elminster's tower. Once everyone has left the tunnel, however, it vanishes completely, leaving no trace of itself behind. The tunnel reappears only when someone else falls into the pit trap, and it cannot be reopened otherwise or used as a short cut to get into Elminster's tower later on.

Intruders who try any digging or magically assisted mining in the vicinity (or at any time when working their way along the back-door route) are apt to receive fast visits from whatever nasty monsters Elminster can summon (whatever the DM wants to use). Ω

Food Fight Erupts in Neighborhood Supermarket

Carrots, broccoli, tomatoes, even brussels sprouts were flying into grocery carts as **The Great American Food Fight Against Cancer** broke out in area supermarkets.

Produce section after recent food fight.

Consumers are reacting to studies which show that foods high in vitamins A and C, high in fiber and low in fat, may help reduce cancer risk.

"My husband is getting whole grain toast tomorrow morning," one shopper declared. A mother was seen throwing carrots into her bag. "Snacks for the kids," she said.

Grocers are, of course, delighted. "This food fight is pretty exciting," said one produce manager, "and there's nothing for me to clean up!"

The American Cancer Society, sponsor of the Food Fight, has more information. Call **1-800-ACS-2345.**

And, be on the lookout for Community Crusade volunteers armed with shopping lists.

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Public Service Message

GHAZAL

BY DAVID HOWERY

Cut the slavers' lash— or fall beneath it.

Artwork by David O. Miller

David is a graduate of Montana State University, where he learned to play the AD&D® game. He has written numerous articles for DRAGON® Magazine, DUNGEON® Adventures, and The General, *from The Avalon Hill Game Company. "Ghazal" was an adventure from his 1989 campaign for the infamous Pentacle adventuring company (Tyler, Terry, Carrie, John, Jim, and Jamaica), to whom he'd like to say, "Hi!"*

"Ghazal" is an AD&D 2nd Edition adventure for 5-7 characters of levels 6-8 (about 42 total levels). This adventure was written for the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® fantasy setting but can be used in any campaign world containing a large desert region. Names and background may have to be changed to fit the details of the DM's world. At least one PC should be a thief or have the mountaineering proficiency (*Player's Handbook*, page 61). The 1st Edition *Wilderness Survival Guide* will be helpful in running this adventure. Background information on the Flanaess and its peoples and cities may be found in "A Guide to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK Fantasy Setting," in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK boxed set.

Some of the role-playing in this adventure hinges on the characters' views on sex roles. If the character group is largely male, this could prove to be fairly entertaining.

Adventure Background

Ages ago, the Suloise and Baklunish empires destroyed each other in a holocaust of magic. As the surviving Suloise fled eastward, they were closely pursued by their many foes. The Suloise, who angered native populations everywhere with their wickedness, were pushed into the wastelands of the far north and south. One of these wastelands was the Bright Desert.

Several smaller tribes of Suloise banded together and fought their way through the Abbor-alz hills, hoping to lose their pursuers and find a place to rest and regain their strength. However, dervishes massed around the desert and stopped the Suloise from leaving. After several fruitless attempts to break out, the Suloise gave up and adapted to life in the desert.

The Suloise are evil but also intelligent and creative. They have learned to put the sparse resources of the desert to

good use. One Suloise tribe, the Tareg, have become dominant in the western half of the Bright Desert. All Tareg are cruel and malicious. They are also fanatical fighters who will not surrender, even if faced with certain death. In Tareg society, the strongest individuals constantly struggle to get to the top, but only within the bounds of acceptable behavior. The Tareg have few laws, but breaking any of them is punishable by death. Obedience to superiors is demanded of all.

The Tareg are also wicked slavers and robbers, attacking areas inside and outside the desert (small raiding parties can get in and out of the desert, but any mass exodus would draw the attention of the dervishes, who would mass to keep the Suloise from leaving). Many captives taken by the Tareg from Hardby, the Duchy of Urnst, and the Wild Coast end their days as slaves in the Great Kingdom or Pomarj. Travelers in the Abbor-alz Hills run the risk of being robbed and murdered. This is one reason why the dervishes guard the hills so closely; being good aligned, they don't want innocents to fall into the hands of the Tareg.

For the Player Characters

The PCs should be in the city of Hardby, either wandering there on their own, or directed there through an offer of employment. Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Although your party's wanderings have led you to many strange places, the free city of Hardby is unique in the Flanaess. Ages ago, the female nobility gained the upper hand and now rules the city. Hardby is ruled by the Despotrix, a hereditary queen.
>
> Even as you are prepared to explore this strange place, a royal page brings you a summons. By order of the Despotrix, you are to meet with an advisor to the queen. The page advises you to heed the summons.

If the PCs ignore the summons or try to flee Hardby, a squadron of cavalry (all women, mounted on light war horses) will try to arrest them. They will pursue the party until they cross a national border. If captured, the PCs will be sentenced to two years' hard labor for ignoring a royal summons.

Soldiers (40): AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; F1; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; chain mail, saber, lance.

Captain: F6; hp 41; THAC0 15; ML 15; other statistics as for soldiers.

Horse, light war (41): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 24; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/1-4; SZ L; ML 7.

If the PCs agree to heed the summons, the page gives them directions to the castle of Lady Minaryn, a knight of Hardby, who lives some miles out in the countryside. At the castle, the PCs are ushered into a small council chamber. Waiting for them is Messalina, a mage who serves as advisor to the Despotrix.

Messalina: AL LN; AC 4; MV 12; W12; hp 40; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 10, D 15, C 15, I 17, W 12, Ch 15; ML 14; *bracers of defense AC 5, staff of power, wand of paralyzation* (12 charges), potion of *healing*; spells: *detect magic, hold portal, magic missile, protection from evil*, detect evil*, detect invisibility*, web, wizard lock, dispel magic, fly, non-detection, tongues, confusion, detect scrying, ice storm, polymorph other, cone of cold, hold monster, passwall, wall of force, death spell.* Messalina cast those spells marked with an asterisk (*) on herself just before the meeting with the PCs; assume the spells last the duration of the interview. Messalina cast *stoneskin* on herself the day before (good vs. nine attacks).

> As you are led into a small room, you see a dark-haired woman already seated. An attractive woman, she wears blue velvet robes and holds a brass-capped staff. Her eyes have a haughty look. As you seat yourselves, the woman says, "Welcome to Minaryn Castle. I am Messalina, chief advisor to the Despotrix of our enlightened city. Forgive me for bringing you all the way out here, but I deemed it prudent not to have you seen at the royal castle. Our liege lady has entrusted me to hire a band of adventurers to do a risky job.
>
> "As you doubtless know, the free city of Greyhawk has been aggressively expanding its borders. Recently, it has claimed land belonging to our Despotrix. If necessary, we will go to war to keep our sovereign lands. However, we prefer a negotiated settlement to avoid bloodshed.
>
> "Our diplomat in Greyhawk, Lady Boudicea, was on the verge of signing an agreement with Greyhawk's lord mayor, Nerof Gasgal, that would set clear and definite borders between our two states. She was to return to Hardby to clear up the details and obtain our Despotrix's agreement. However, Lady Boudicea's caravan was attacked on the road from Greyhawk, and she was taken prisoner. We had no idea who had captured her until we received a ransom note.
>
> "Boudicea is being held by the Tareg slavers of the Bright Desert, at their base fort of Ghazal. The fiends realize her importance to us and have demanded a huge ransom that would beggar our city if we paid it.
>
> "We must have Boudicea back. Her diplomatic skills are vital to secure the agreement with Greyhawk. Only Boudicea knows all the details of the agreement; Gasgal will not accept a sudden change of ambassador at this stage of the negotiations. Yet our Despotrix has ruled out paying the ransom; it would do us little good to have secure borders and a penniless population. Thus, our only hope is to rescue Boudicea from the Tareg. We cannot use any of our native troops or agents, as they are too well known. Our female adventurers would stand out in the male-dominated lands of the Tareg, and the slavers would undoubtedly be alerted if we sent a large body of Hardby troops into the desert.
>
> "For these reasons, our Despotrix has entrusted me to hire a band of outsiders to rescue Boudicea. You are unknown to the people of Hardby and the Tareg, so none of their spies should take any notice of you. Are you interested in this offer?"

Messalina's initial offer to the PCs is 7,000 gp each if Boudicea is returned alive, but she can be bargained up to 10,000 gp each. None of this payment is to be delivered until Boudicea is returned safe and sound. Even this large payment is comparatively small in relation to the large ransom demand.

If the PCs refuse the offer, Messalina ushers them out with a warning not to discuss the meeting with anyone, on penalty of death. If the PCs accept the offer, Messalina gives them the following information:

The Tareg are a vile tribe of slavers who wear long robes and turbans that cover all but their hands and eyes. They are fanatic in combat and are blood enemies of the Abbor-alz dervishes.

The Tareg fort, Ghazal, is built on top of a pillar of rock jutting out of the desert floor. A long bridge connects the pillar to a nearby plateau.

A Hardby patrol recently killed several Tareg raiders. A *speak with dead* spell revealed that the prison in Ghazal is within the south wall of the fort. Messalina suggests that the PCs climb the south wall of the rock pillar and sneak into the prison, avoiding the crowds of Tareg elsewhere in the fort. Thus, the PCs should take mountain-climbing gear such as ropes and spikes. Unfortunately, the dead Tareg didn't know anything further about the interior of the prison.

Hardby will provide the PCs with any nonmagical gear they ask for, including food, camels, mountaineering gear, etc. The city will also provide a map of the known area of the Bright Desert nearest to Hardby. The city has a rough idea of where Ghazal is, but not exact knowledge of its location, as indicated by the question mark on the players' map. Hardby will provide a written safe-conduct that will let the PCs pass among the Abbor-alz dervishes, if they are encountered. Messalina suggests that the PCs use the mountain pass into the desert, as shown on the map, since much of the Abbor-alz bordering the desert is cliff wall. The pass is a known and safe route.

For the Dungeon Master

The Tareg slavers still have typical Suloise fair skin, light hair, and blue eyes. Their light skin requires them to wear long robes and turbans as protection from the sun. Their preferred weapons are the scimitar, light crossbow, and spear. Some wear leather, studded leather, or chain mail under their robes. The Tareg ride camels in the Bright Desert, using horses only when on raids outside the desert.

Several sections of the *WSG* will be useful in running this adventure:

Temperature (page 19). The effective temperature is in the "76 or higher" column of Table 3. Adjust the PCs' personal temperatures as appropriate.

Damage from Heat (pages 26-28). The PCs will be susceptible to the dangers of heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

Movement (pages 30-33). The Abbor-alz hills are rugged terrain, and the Bright Desert is normal terrain.

Climbing (pages 33-39). Refer to this section when the PCs climb the rock pillar.

Food and Water (pages 50-60). The terrain is subtropical desert, and the season is summer.

Without the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, the DM may use his own set of rules for the effects of a hot desert on adventurers. Rules on heat injuries, thirst, fatigue, and movement over rough terrain would be the most relevant.

The Journey

Movement rates can be found in the *WSG*, page 32, or in the 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 124. Note that the "Hardby & Vicinity" map scale is 30 miles per hex. If the PCs try to enter the Bright Desert by any way other than the mountain pass shown on the map, there is a 75% chance that they will reach the edge of the high plateau, looking down at the Bright Desert below. They will have to climb down 50'-120'.

Random encounters in and around the Bright Desert may be pulled from the Glossography booklet in the WORLD OF GREYHAWK boxed set or from any standard listing of encounters appropriate to the terrain type. A few minor desert encounters should be generated to give the PCs the feel of the land.

Although the Tareg do not know that the PCs are coming, they suspect that Hardby will attempt to rescue its diplomat. As the PCs move out of the Abbor-alz pass, they are heading directly into a Tareg patrol watching the pass into the desert.

> The journey through the Abbor-alz Hills has been long, but you have completed the trip through the pass. Finally, you have reached the edge of the desert. Beyond several low hills, you can see a vast expanse of sand reaching to the horizon.

The map shows the layout of the Tareg ambush. The PCs enter the map at A as they move out of the pass. At this point, PC rangers have a 25% chance to notice the hidden Tareg. When the PCs reach point B, the hidden Tareg fire their crossbows, each one

aiming at a random party member. At each of the 14 positions marked X on the map, a Tareg lies prone, nearly hidden by his brown robes.

Tareg soldiers (15): AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar); ML 13; XP 35; leather armor, scimitar, light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, dagger.

The Tareg leader, Mirak, is hidden at the location marked Y. He will direct the Tareg ambush as necessary, shouting directions in the Tareg tongue. Like all Tareg warriors, Mirak is a fanatical man who will never surrender. His greatest concern is to ensure that one of his men gets away to warn Ghazal.

Mirak, Tareg captain: AL LE; AC 6; MV 12; F8; hp 50; THAC0 13; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar); S 17, D 16, C 16, I 13, W 10, Ch 11; ML 20 (special); XP 975; leather armor, scimitar, light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts, two throwing daggers, 22 gp.

The 15th Tareg stands guard by 16 camels at the area marked with a Z. His light crossbow is loaded and is in his hands. If a large force of enemies comes into sight, the Tareg guard will cut the tether line with his scimitar and spook the camels into the desert, to prevent the foes from getting them. He will otherwise lift his crossbow and fire.

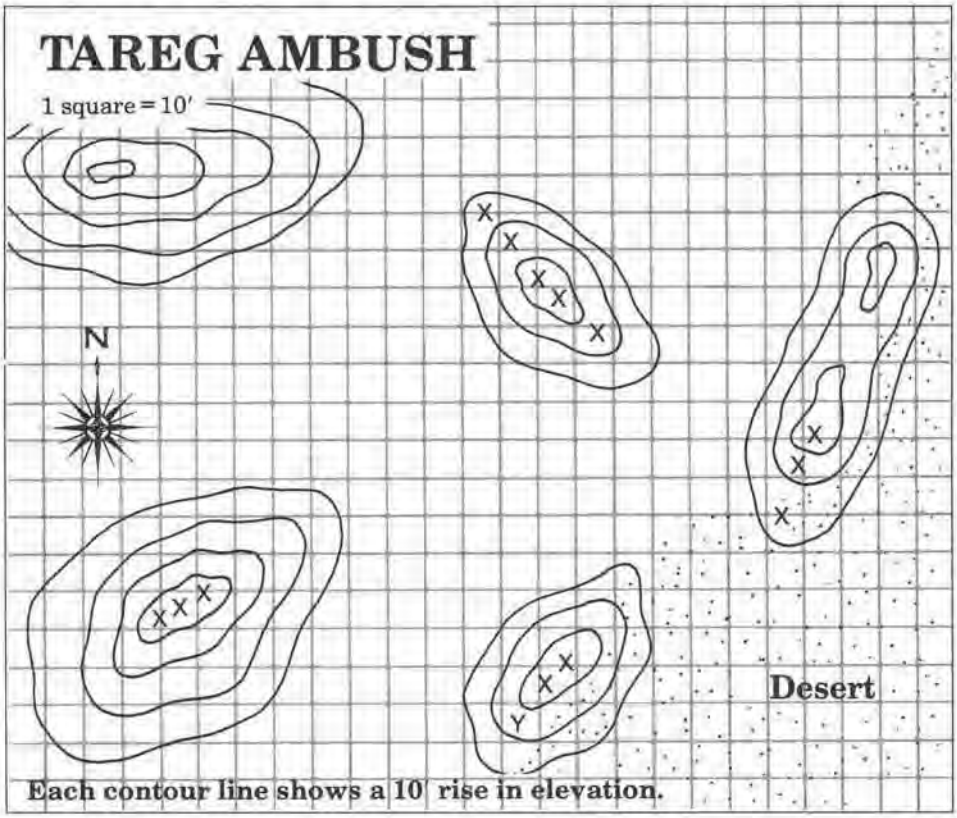
Camels (16): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 21; HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA spit; SZ L; ML 3; XP 65; MC (Animal, Herd).

The Tareg will fight an intelligent battle, firing from prone positions (90% concealment, −4 to be hit) and staying in sight for only a few seconds at a time. Note that the Tareg on the hills have a +1 bonus to hit the PCs as long as the slavers are on higher ground.

If 10 or more of the Tareg are killed, Mirak will try to break away and send the camel guard back to Ghazal to warn the fort. If the guard escapes, Ghazal will be alerted. Meanwhile, Mirak tries to delay the PCs as long as possible. A fanatic, Mirak will fight to the death.

Oasis

This fixed encounter takes place in the open desert (hex X3/91 on the WORLD OF GREYHAWK map). A party of Tareg slavers has stopped at the oasis to water their camels and are still there when the PCs arrive.



The Bright Desert has lived up to its reputation as a harsh and desolate place. You've seen nothing but cactus and scrub brush for miles. You've been looking for the oasis that your map shows in this area, and now that goal is in sight.

The Tareg have posted two guards mounted on camels, so the DM should roll for surprise as normal. The other 12 Tareg are resting on the ground by the pond in the center of the oasis, but they can reach their camels in one round.

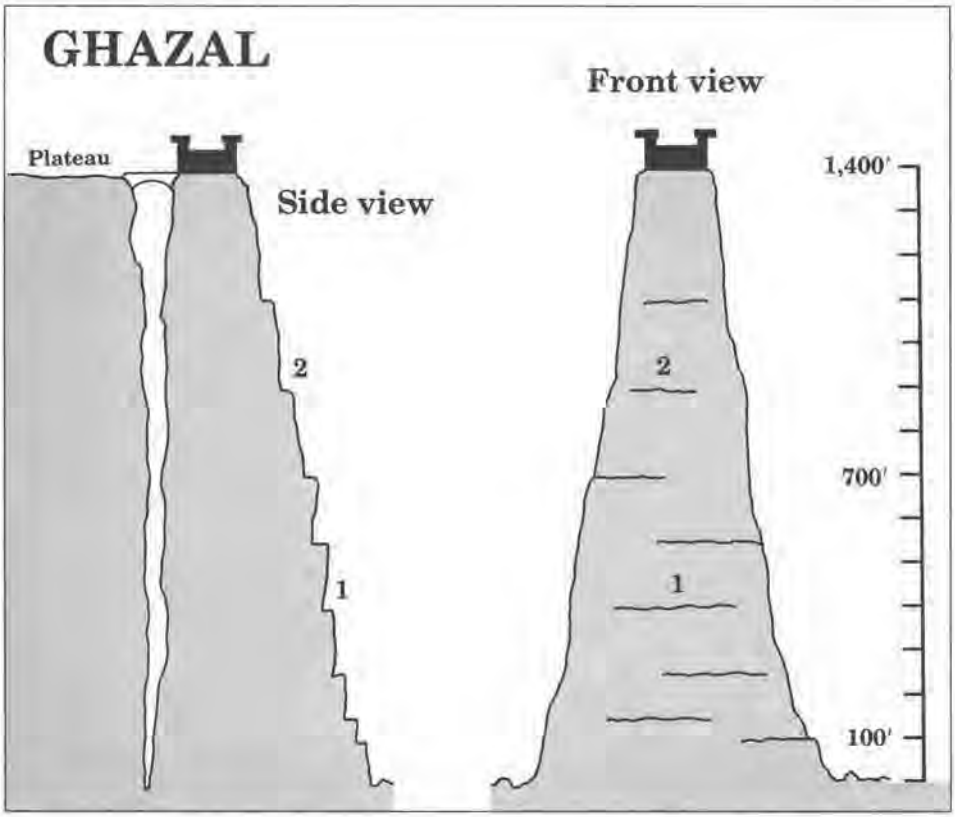
Once the Tareg sight the PCs, the two guards charge to the attack while shouting warnings to the others. The Tareg use their lances for a mounted charge, then switch to scimitars for melee. If eight of them are killed, the rest scatter in all directions, hoping that one will get away to warn the fort at Ghazal.

Tareg slavers (13): AL LE; AC 7; MV 12; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar; bonuses for initial charge with lance); ML 13; XP 15; leather armor, shield, scimitar, medium horse lance, 2-8 gp.

Tareg leader: AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; F5; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar; bonuses for initial charge with lance); S 17, I 10, W 11, D 16, C 15, Ch 12; ML 15; XP 175; leather armor, shield, scimitar, heavy horse lance, 21 gp.

Ghazal

After days of travel in sand and dust, your goal is in sight. Ahead of you, the Abbor-alz hills end abruptly at the cliff edge of a plateau. A huge rock spire stands near the cliff, as if it were a splinter of the plateau. You can see the walls of a small fort atop the spire. A massive bridge connects the fort to the plateau. The spire rises straight up 1,400′ from the valley floor below. While three sides of it are crumbling and broken, the granite precipice of the south face is interrupted by a series of sturdy ledges. It will not be an easy climb, but you have a good chance of success.



The Climb

For rules on climbing, refer to the *WSG*, pages 33-39. The rock spire is treated as a cliff with a rough (nonslippery) surface. Several ledges break up the cliff, as shown on the map. These ledges are severe breaks that protrude 9"-12". They are sturdy and safe unless noted otherwise.

The climb up the spire will be a series of trips from ledge to ledge. The DM should roll for climbing success for each trip between ledges.

There are two encounter areas on the rock spire:

1. Unstable ledge. A 50' section at the center of this ledge is unstable. For every 10 lbs. of weight set here, there is a 2% chance that the section will crumble away, dropping everyone on it 200' onto the ledge below. (Only the 50' section indicated is unstable; the rest of the ledge is safe.)

2. Gargoyle Lair. At this point, 25' above the ledge, a cave opens into the cliff face. This is the home of four gargoyles, trained servants of the Tareg. The gargoyles were placed here to guard against an assault up the south face. Noise from the ledge below will attract their attention, and one gargoyle will look out and down. Since it is very likely that the PCs will be looking up, roll for surprise as normal.

The cave entrance is 20' wide and 10' high. When the gargoyles spot the PCs, two of them vault into the air, while the other two drop rocks down onto the intruders for 1-4 hp damage. Any PC hit by a rock must make a dexterity check on 1d20 to avoid falling off the ledge. After four rounds of throwing rocks, these two gargoyles join their friends in the air.

Flying gargoyles attack with a quick swoop, using only their claws. On any attack roll that is four or more higher than needed to hit, the gargoyle has gotten a solid hit, requiring the PC to make a successful dexterity check or fall off the ledge. Due to the speed of the gargoyles' swoops, each PC can make only one return melee attack, even if he would normally have more than one. If two of the gargoyles are slain, the others retreat to their cave. If the PCs pursue them, the gargoyles will fight in the entrance.

The cave is 30' wide and 30' deep. It is bare except for a pile of trash at the rear. The monsters have pilfered a few items from slain adventurers. Hidden in the trash pile are four gems (500 gp each), a brooch (800 gp), and a silver amulet (400 gp).

Gargoyles (4): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9, fly 15 (C); HD 4+4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 11; XP 650.

Key to Ghazal

The base of the fort is built of stone blocks. Very little wood is used, since it all has to be imported. The walls are 20' high and 5' wide, with a battlement at the top to provide cover for archers. There is very little room between the fort walls and the cliff, only 10"-12" (barely room for one person to stand).

If the fort has been alerted by survivors of the ambush or the oasis, there will be 10 very alert guards on the south wall. Otherwise, there will be only two guards pacing back and forth. The PCs can easily time their climb to pass between the guards when they are pacing away from each other, facing outward. There is only a 10% chance that the guards will spot the intruders if the PCs develop a reasonable plan. If the adventurers are seen, one guard will run to warn the prison guards and barracks.

Tareg guards (2 or 10): AL LE; AC 7; MV 9; F1; hp 6; THAC0 20; #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar); ML 13; XP 35; studded leather armor, scimitar, light crossbow, 20 bolts.

Of the buildings within the fortress, only the prison is detailed. The occupants of the other buildings are listed, but details are left to the DM. If the PCs are following Messalina's plan, they should not be exploring any other buildings, as Boudicea is held in the prison.

Unless otherwise noted, all warriors found within this citadel have the following statistics:

Tareg soldier: AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; F1; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar); ML 13; XP 35; leather armor, scimitar, light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts.

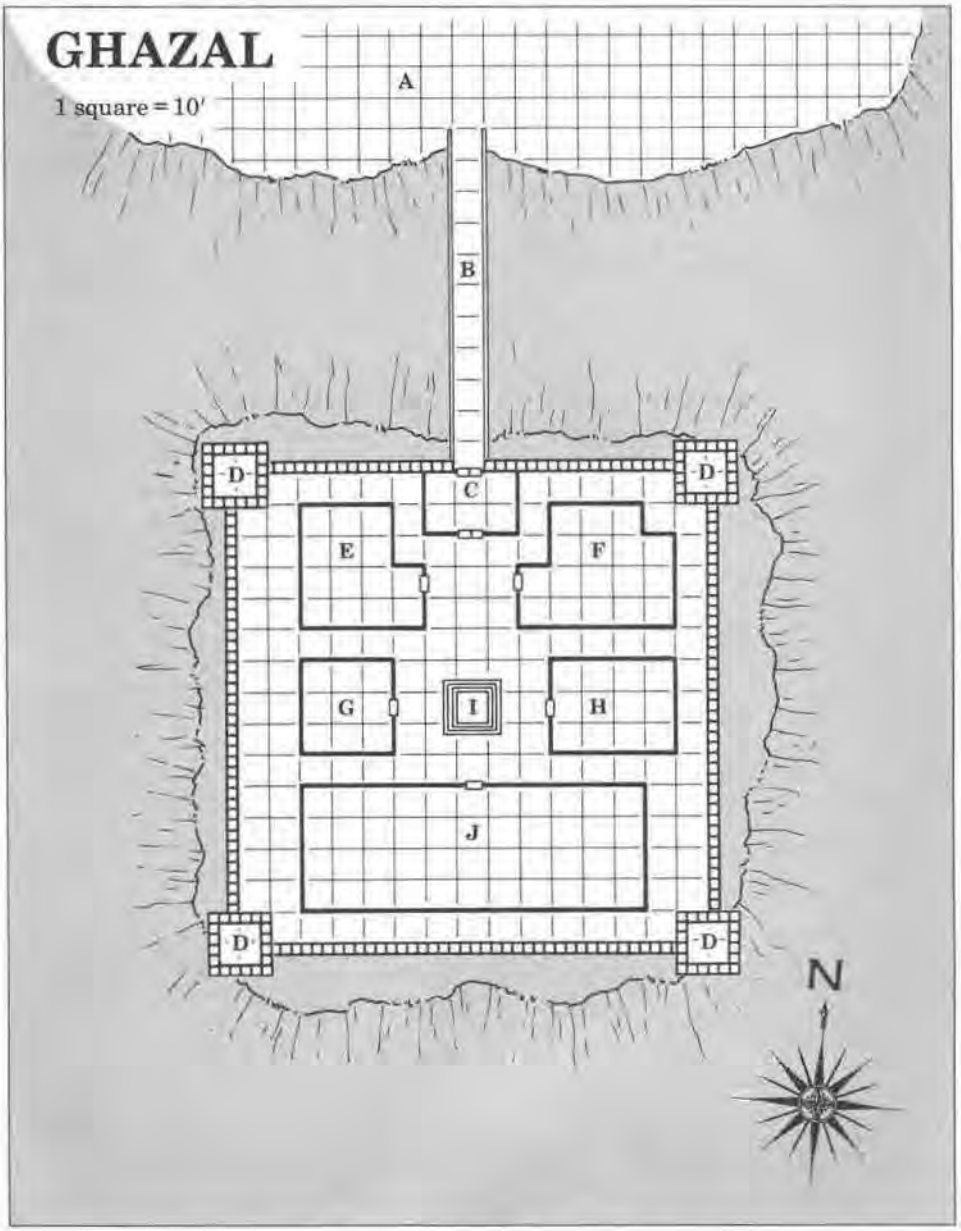
Tareg lieutenant: AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; F5; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 3/2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar); ML 15; XP 975; leather ar-

mor, scimitar, light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts.

Tareg captain: AL LE; AC 8; MV 12; F8; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar); ML 15; XP 975; leather armor, scimitar, light crossbow, 20 crossbow bolts.

Women, children, and other noncombatants have these statistics:

Noncombatant: AL LE; AC 10; MV 12 (child: 6); 0-level human; hp 1-4; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; ML 9; XP nil.



A. Plateau. The Abbor-alz hills end here in a series of plateaus. This one is at the very end of the range, at the edge of the Bright Desert. Due to its importance, there are always 1d20 + 20 Tareg **soldiers** (F1) and a **captain** (F8) on patrol on the plateau. All are mounted on camels.

B. Bridge. This massive stone structure is a marvel of engineering, typical of ancient Suloise building. A mixture of good design and magic supports the bridge over the gorge. The bridge is 10′ wide and has walls 5′ high.

C. Gatehouse. The gate to the bridge is barred and will be opened only to those who know the password. There are 20 Tareg **soldiers** (F1) and a **captain** (F8) on duty here. The south gate leading into Ghazal is not barred, but a password is still required to pass the sentries.

D. Towers. Each of these four towers stands 40′ high. The tops are open platforms with 5′-high battlements. There are four Tareg **soldiers** (F1) in each tower.

E. Common Housing. This four-story building houses some of the common Tareg. Eighty **noncombatants** (32 women and 48 children) live here at all times, along with 21-40 (1d20 + 20) **soldiers** (F1). The cellar level stores food and water in case the fort is ever besieged (unlikely as that is).

F. Common Housing. This large building is divided into numerous small dwellings. It is four stories high and has one basement level. More common Tareg live here: 67 **noncombatants** (29 women and 38 children) and 21-40 (1d20 + 20) **soldiers** (F1).

G. Captains' Barracks. This three-story building houses the Tareg officers, the Tareg chief, and their families. At any time, there are 21 **noncombatants** (six women and 15 children), 1-3 **lieutenants** (F5), and 1-3 **captains** (F8) here. The chief's quarters are in the lower of the two basement levels.

H. Barracks. The bachelor **soldiers** (F1) live in this three-story building, but only 21-40 (1d20 + 20) are here at any given time. The rest are off on patrol or raids.

I. Auction Block. This 5′-high platform with steps is used as an auction block for slaves and captured goods.

J. Prison. Slaves and prisoners are kept in this large building. It has one ground level and two dungeon levels. The Tareg have done their best to make the prison a hellish place, feared and hated by their slaves. It is a most important place to the Tareg, as their livelihood depends much on ransomed prisoners.

The prison is made of huge stone

blocks mortared together. It is featureless, with no windows and only one door.

Prison, Ground Level

Unless noted otherwise, the ceilings in all rooms are 10' high.

J1. Records.

> The entrance into the prison is not what you expected. Instead of grim cells, the room is lined with shelves of books. A desk and chair stand to the left of the door.

The Tareg keep detailed records on what they have stolen, who they have kidnapped, and how much ransom was demanded. They find it useful to keep such information for dealing with the outside world. The Tareg scribe, Murad (currently in area J14), is the records keeper. The books here—dozens of them—are all ledgers that contain entries going back several decades. The current ledger lies open on the desk. If the PCs examine the book (they must be able to read ancient Suloise), they will see an entry on the last page: "Boudicea of Hardby. Placed in the deep cell. Ransom to be determined later." The entry is dated one week before Messalina contacted the PCs.

In addition to the current ledger, the desk holds two jars of ink, 10 sheets of paper, and two quill pens. Any country that borders the Bright Desert (i.e., those that have lost citizens to the Tareg) will pay up to 500 gp for the current ledger.

J2. Search Room. A flat box lies on a bare table. The only other item in the room is a clothes rack.

Captives are brought in here to be searched for valuables. The flat box holds a wand of *metal and mineral detection* (20 charges) and a *wand of magic detection* (25 charges), which are used to aid in searches.

J3. Ransom Cells. Each of these four cells holds one or two dejected people. A Tareg with a spear stands in the corridor.

These cells are for prisoners awaiting ransom. The Tareg treat them fairly well, as they do not want too many angry relatives attacking the fort. The Tareg with the spear will fight to the death to prevent the PCs from opening the cell doors. If the door is left open, he will shout for help and alert those in area J4.

Tareg guard: AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; F4; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, other statistics unremarkable; ML 14; XP 120; chain mail, spear, club (on belt thong), 10 gp.

The cells hold nine **noncombatants:**

A. A woman of Hardby (not Boudicea). A reward of 500 gp will be given for her safe return.

B. Two men, citizens of Greyhawk city. A reward of 100 gp each is offered for their safe return.

C. Four men, miners from the Duchy of Urnst. The Duchy's men will pay 200 gp for the safe return of all four.

D. Two women, relatives of the Magister of Dyvers. The Magister will pay 500 gp for their safe return.

J4. Security. This room has no furnishings except for a number of stools. At the back of the room, a staircase descends into darkness.

There are six guards stationed here to keep an eye on the ground floor. If alerted by the guard at area J3, or if the PCs attack, five of the Tareg move to attack the PCs while the sixth runs down the stairs to warn the guards in area J6.

Tareg guards (6): AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; F3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar); ML 14; XP 65; chain mail, scimitar, 2-8 gp each.

J5. Jailor. This room has a comfortable bed, a footlocker, and a weapons rack. Pegs on the south wall hold three large rings of keys. The Tareg jailor, Rashid, lives here. This huge and cruel Tareg is in charge of security. A lifetime of watching over terrified prisoners has driven all pity out of him. Although he is respectful of his superiors, he is brutal to those beneath him. He has become lazy and indulgent, though, inflicting torture for his own amusement instead of interrogation. His greatest fear is of a prison break; a successful one would mean his death as punishment.

At the first sign of strife, Rashid grabs his whip and scimitar, then moves to combat the PCs, fighting to the death. Rashid is highly skilled with his whip and will use it at a distance if no one is meleeing with him.

Rashid: AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; F8; hp 50; THAC0 13; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/55, D 10, C 16, I 11, W 8, Ch 7; ML 20 (special); XP 975; chain mail, *scimitar +2*, 15' whip, dagger, 12 gp.

The footlocker holds clothing, a spare 15' whip, two daggers, a pouch with 80 gp, and a pair of boots. There are three rings of keys; one for the ransom cells (area J3), one for the slave pens (area J6), and one for the monster cells (areas J8-J12).

Prison, Dungeon Level

This dungeon is holds both slaves and trained monsters. The monsters are used for defense and to keep the slaves in line. If an enemy ever got into the fort or if the slaves revolted, the monsters would be released (they've been trained not to attack Tareg). In addition, the sadistic Tareg occasionally feed a rebellious slave to the monsters. Only areas J7, J13, and J14 are actual rooms with solid walls. All other rooms are cells with heavy bars.

The Tareg treat their slaves with deliberate cruelty, out of pure maliciousness, as an outlet for their wicked nature. They maintain a well-equipped torture room (area J13). Occasionally, the Tareg let one of the trained monsters loose to roam the corridors and feed on rebellious slaves, to serve as an example to the others.

J6. Slave Cells. The dungeon is a grim place. Within a maze of small cells, people in tattered clothing crouch on the filthy, straw-covered floor.

Each 10' × 10' cell holds 3-5 people (treat each as a **noncombatant** of random alignment). The slaves are dispirited, but if freed they will flee out of the prison to rush the gatehouse and attack the guards there. The barred gate to the bridge will halt them long enough for the entire complex to be alerted. It will take the Tareg an hour to round up the majority of the slaves and return them to their cells after severe beatings. The PCs will have that long to find Boudicea and get away with her.

If the soldier from area J4 warned the dungeon guards of intruders, 10 guards (from area J7) are waiting at the foot of the stairs leading into the slave cell area. Otherwise, there are no guards here.

If the PCs escape with Boudicea, they may feel guilty about leaving the slaves in Tareg hands. However, they cannot expect to escape down the cliff face with dozens of slaves. The Tareg will punish their slaves but not kill them; they need them now more than ever. One of the

slaves' first jobs will be to build higher walls and more guard towers. The DM can arrange another adventure later for the PCs to rescue the slaves, if desired.

If the PCs are captured, they too will be caged in this area. Spell-casters will be given separate cells; their hands will be tied behind their backs, and have their mouths will be gagged. The party will be fed once per day and treated as the other slaves.

J7. Security. This room is bare except for two benches by the door and a lever on the north wall.

The dungeon guards use this room for a guard post. There are 11 of them on duty. The lever on the wall is hooked up to the monster cages (areas 8A-8E). If the PCs overpower the guards (five or more Tareg are killed), one of the remaining guards will pull the lever to open all five monster cages and free the beasts to roam the corridors. The monsters have been carefully trained not to attack anyone wearing Tareg clothing (robes, turbans, face mask, etc.).

Tareg (11): AL LE; AC 4; MV 9; F2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type (specialized with scimitar); ML 13; XP 35; chain mail, shield, scimitar, 2-8 gp each.

J8. Death Dogs. Two zebra-striped death dogs (a variant breed) are kept in this cage. They tend to howl like coyotes when left alone.

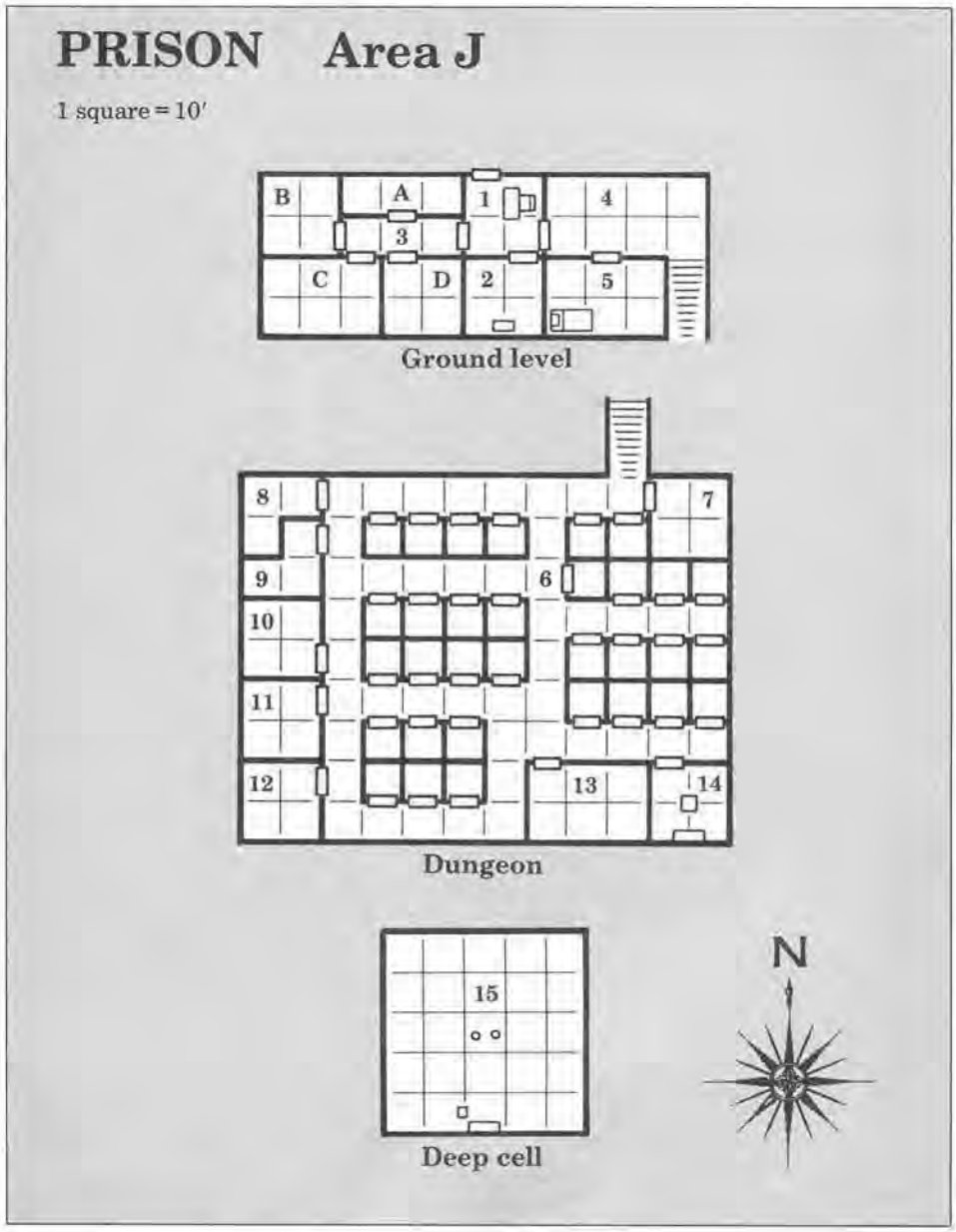
Death dogs (2): INT semi; AL NE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 2+1; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1-10/1-10; SA bite causes disease; attack roll of 19-20 knocks victim to ground; SZ M; ML 11; XP 120; MC (Dogs).

J9. Owlbear. A vicious owlbear is in this cage. It is a runt, but it was the best that the Tareg could find.

Owlbear: INT low; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5+2; hp 16; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SA hug; SZ L; ML 11; XP 420; MC.

J10. Displacer Beast. The displacer beast in this cell particularly hates elves and half-elves, attacking them in preference over all other beings.

Displacer beast: INT semi; AL N; AC 4; MV 15; HD 6; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; SD −2 on opponent's attack roll, saves as 12th-level warrior (+2); SZ L; ML 13; XP 975; MC.



J11. Hieracosphinx. The Tareg keep a large hieracosphinx in here. If released, the hieracosphinx will barrel through prisoners and guards alike in search of an escape route. It wishes to flee the complex, then prey on Tareg for the rest of its natural life. Anyone who promises the hieracosphinx its freedom will gain its (temporary) assistance.

Hieracosphinx: INT low; AL CE; AC 1; MV 9, fly 36 (D); HD 9; hp 45; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 2-8/2-8/1-10; SZ L; ML 13; XP 1,400; MC.

J12. Teratosaurus. The most feared monster, a bright green teratosaurus, can barely turn around in this large cage. How the Tareg got it up the mesa and into this cage is a secret known only to one of their most powerful wizards, who was recently slain on a mission to the City of Greyhawk. By rights, the teratosaurus should have eaten the Tareg out of their own fortress, but the wizard had a clear, spindle-shaped *ioun stone* that he cast above the monster's head, so it never hungers or thirsts (though it still loves to kill). There is a 10% chance per round that anyone

looking at the monster will see the stone in orbit around its head.

Teratosaurus: INT non; AL N; AC 5; MV 18; HD 10; hp 60; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/3-18; SZ H; ML 11; XP 1,400; MC (Dinosaurs).

J13. Torture Chamber. This room is filled with a variety of cruel instruments. A stretching rack stands by the east wall. A pair of manacles on chains hangs from the ceiling. The walls are lined with racks holding probes, knives, scalpels, whips, and other wicked items.

The jailor, Rashid (area J5), is also the questioner. There is no one here now, but all the equipment shows signs of heavy use.

J14. Headquarters. This room is empty except for a tall cabinet against the south wall and a podium in the center of the room.

The Tareg chief and his captains meet here to discuss prison business. The portal to the deep cell (area J15) is controlled from this room. While the chief is currently in the deep cell, his scribe, Murad, and two of his **captains** (F8) keep watch here. If there is noise or the sound of melee from elsewhere in the dungeon, these three will move out into the corridors to fight the PCs.

Murad: AL LE; AC 5; MV 12; W3; hp 10; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 11, D 15, C 15, I 18, W 14, Ch 11; ML 9; XP 65; *bracers of defense AC 6*, dagger, *wand of fire* (12 charges), 33 gp; spells: *burning hands, magic missile, web.*

Murad first uses his *magic missile* spell to disrupt an enemy spell-caster. He uses his wand next. Murad is a small Tareg but very influential due to his position as scribe to the chief. Physically weak, he had a difficult time growing up among his fierce tribe, and only his magical ability gives him any status or respect. He is domineering and arrogant, outwardly contemptuous of warriors although respectful to Yusuf, the Tareg chief. In truth, he is afraid of strong fighters, and his bravado is a cover for this. If attacked, Murad directs the bulk of his magic against PC fighters, partly out of panic.

Murad has a 1"-diameter, magical steel ball in his pouch. This odd item is actually the key to the portal to the deep cell, a system devised by the same now-dead wizard who got the teratosaurus into the fortress. The cabinet on the south wall contains the magical portal, actually a *teleport* system controlled by the podium. When Murad's steel ball is placed into a small hole in the center of the podium, the cabinet fills with mist. When anyone steps into the mist, he and the steel ball *teleport* down into the deep cell. The teleportee appears in an identical cabinet in the deep cell, and the steel ball appears on a similar podium there. When the steel ball is taken out of the hole, the mist and the portal disappears.

J15. The Deep Cell.

> The room beyond the portal has no exits except the misty cabinet through which you entered. A podium stands near the portal. In the center of the room, a woman is kneeling between two stone columns. Her arms are raised, and her hands seem to be trapped inside the column as if her flesh has been melded into the stone. A large Tareg stands behind her, looking down at her upturned face. One hand clutches her dark hair; the other hand holds a large scimitar, its razor edge at the woman's throat.

This chamber was carved into the rock 30' below area J14. The only way to reach it is through the magical portal in the cabinet or some other *teleport*-type spell. The woman is Boudicea, and the man is Yusuf, the Tareg chief. He has been questioning her about political secrets, and her stubbornness angered him enough to cause his brutal threat. Yusuf is facing the portal cabinet and cannot be surprised when the PCs appear, although he certainly didn't expect them!

Yusuf: AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; F8/W10; hp 80; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg by spell or weapon type (specialized with scimitar); S 18/80, D 12, C 17, I 18, W 11, Ch 16; ML 17; XP 5,000; *bracers of defense AC 3, scimitar of speed +1*, dagger, 44 gp, spell book (has all memorized spells plus *read magic*); spells: *burning hands, magic missile* ×2, *shocking grasp, detect invisibility, flaming sphere, invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, dispel magic* ×2, *hold person, Evard's black tentacles, fire shield, cone of cold, wall of force.*

Boudicea: AL NG; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; I 17, Ch 18, other statistics unremarkable; ML 16; etiquette proficiency.

Unless the PCs are disguised as Tareg, Yusuf demands their surrender and threatens to kill Boudicea (he will do no such thing, as she is much too valuable). If the PCs refuse or attack, Yusuf casts a *wall of force* across the room (enclosing himself and, if possible, his prisoner) and retreats to the back. Then Yusuf casts *invisibility* and *detect invisibility* spells on himself. If discovered, the Tareg chief casts *fire shield* on himself, then hurls all the useful combat spells at his disposal that will keep the PCs at a distance. If they get close enough to melee, Yusuf abandons spells and fights with his scimitar.

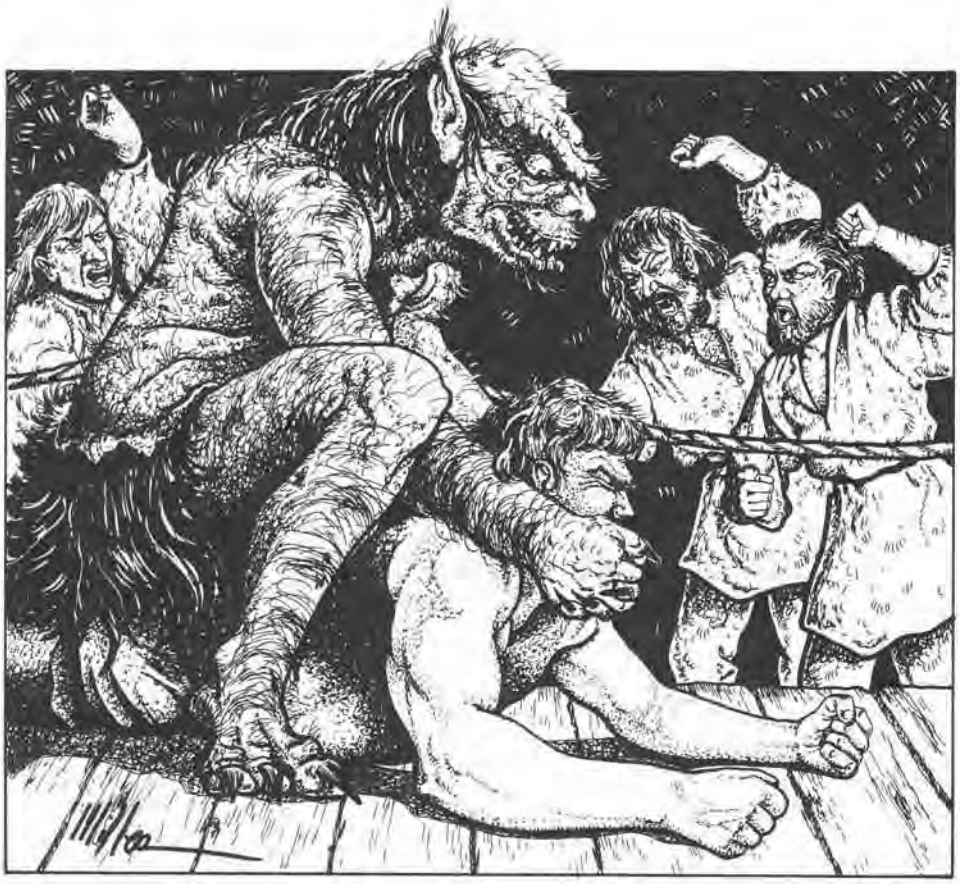
The Tareg chief is a calculating man. Strong and brave, he fears nothing. Yusuf is used to absolute obedience from the Tareg and being able to overcome enemies through his prowess. Continued resistance from the PCs will baffle and enrage him. Yusuf will try to kill the PCs, if necessary, but he would prefer to take them alive for ransom—and extensive torture. He will not surrender since he is so proud and vain. Yusuf's *scimitar of speed* gives him the first strike automatically, unless the PCs are *hasted* or have similar weapons.

In his belt pouch, Yusuf has a small steel ball identical to the one that Murad carries; it opens the portal in the cabinet. The pouch also holds a short copper wand that operates the stone columns (another invention of the now-dead wizard who captured the teratosaurus). One end of the wand, when touched to a column, causes flesh to be drawn into the column, actually melding the flesh into the stone with no danger to either victim or user of the wand. Yusuf uses the wand and pillars to confine his victim's arms and hands. The other end of the wand will release the flesh when touched to a column. The ends of the wand are marked with the first and last letters of the Suloise alphabet.

Concluding the Adventure

Boudicea has the same haughty, arrogant attitude as Messalina. Being captured has angered her greatly, and having to be rescued will not improve her temper, as she is a very independent person. She will make the journey back to Hardby a little rough on her rescuers, but only verbally. Because of her noble

Continued on page 40



A WRASTLE WITH BERTRUM

BY WILLIE WALSH

A little bet, a little bout, a chance to trash a tavern out.

Artwork by David O. Miller

Willie says: "Shortly after I completed this module, I was offered a job as a 'pub spy,' drinking in bars and writing about it afterwards! It's probably just as well nothing ever came of that job. I mean, look at my review of the Rattlesnake Inn!"

Presented in AD&D® 2nd Edition rules, this short module is designed for a small party of player characters numbering no more than eight, of 2nd level or higher (16 total levels). Its purpose is to bridge a gap between the time when the PCs return from a dungeon or wilderness adventure and when they are finished resting and are off again into the wilds. Any race or class of character may take part, though the more hit points a character has, the better. Skill at unarmed combat is very helpful but not essential.

The scenario revolves around a rather disreputable tavern called the Rattlesnake Inn, which is infamous for its numerous shady dealings in connection with sporting events—either legal or illegal—and for the roughneck characters who frequent it. The PCs may well fall into this second category.

A floor plan of the single-story building is provided at 25 mm scale for use with lead miniatures or the cardstock pieces included with this adventure. Use of miniatures (of either type) is highly recommended for their entertainment value. However, imagination alone is sufficient if the Dungeon Master wants to play the module without them.

With the use of the wide range of lead miniatures available, or with those provided with this module, the following pieces are required:

—1 human figure, to represent the owner of the tavern

—1 troll figure, to represent Bertrum Troll

—1 fighter figure and 1 wizard figure, to represent both "faces" of Minimin

—7 dwarf figures, for Sherman's Dwarven Bandits

—5 dwarf figures (different from above) for Dudley Ambrose's group when disguised

—5 halfling figures for Dudley Ambrose and group unmasked

—14 zero-level types to represent the poor plebs who get caught up in the action

—Enough lead figures to show the players what their characters look like

This makes a grand total of 35 figures, excluding those used as PCs' markers. The use of small items of model furniture—tables, chairs, stools, etc.—is up to the DM. In playtesting, these had considerable influence on PC actions and tactics, adding extra color to the basic adventure, so use them if you can.

Adventure Background

Many of the adventurers who pass through the town of Xylon carry with them strange items and odd stories of the wild lands from which they have just returned. Gold and silver flow freely over the bar of the Rattlesnake Inn in return for the strong brew that the landlord, Uriah Alekeep, serves up. Certainly, this is the one redeeming feature of the public house, as it is unclean, smelly, and often frequented by strange customers best not examined too closely. For all that, trouble is rare—at least *inside* the premises—for Uriah has a special troublemaker-deterrent that sits meekly near a doorway until needed.

Once, a customer was unable to pay his bill. Rather than face the wrath of the unfriendly Mr. Alekeep, he offered in trade a creature he had taken from the wilds as a curiosity: a strangely precocious troll-child, which Uriah named Bertrum after his ex-wife's father. (He had considered calling him Bill, for obvious reasons, but the creature's face reminded him of his father-in-law too much to miss out on calling him Bertrum.)

Bertrum Troll soon became chief (and only) bouncer at "Rattlers" (as it is locally known), and few were the customers who shirked their financial responsibilities or caused fights in the smokey Xylon drinking den. The troll ejects customers bodily through handy doors or windows, having been taught to do so after replastering sections of wall began to get expensive for the landlord. As Uriah's two brothers are a carpenter and glazier, he doesn't mind replacing doors and windows as much, since he gets a discount for bringing business their way. In any event, it appears a troll's aim improves with age, and Bertrum can usually avoid messing up the walls with botched shots. His strength, too, appears to be increasing. Lately, the rascally owner of the tavern has figured out a plan to increase business and earn a few extra coppers besides. He has sent out flyers in town, hoping to attract adventurers lately come to Xylon.

For the Player Characters

Read, or paraphrase the following to the players:

> You find the town of Xylon has one inn, called the Rattlesnake, which is located north of the river and well away from the rest of the settlement. It has something of a reputation as a rough-and-ready establishment, you hear, but it's the only place in town that accepts adventurers as lodgers.
>
> On the way through town, someone hands you a sheet of paper from a bundle he's passing out to townspeople. It reads:
>
> *Wrastle the Troll!*
> *All comers are welcome to fight in unarmed combat against Bertrum the Troll, at the Rattlesnake Inn. Beat Bertrum and win 500 gold pieces! Beat him twice and win 2,000 gold pieces!*
> *(Bets accepted on outcome at house odds. Usual rules apply.)*

In very tiny print at the bottom of the flyer are the words:

The management cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage to competitors at the Rattlesnake Inn.

For the Dungeon Master

Uriah's prize fund is outlandish, to say the least, but all the more so because he simply doesn't have that kind of money on hand. He merely hopes to get a good crowd into the common room to watch a fight that he thinks cannot be won by any competitor, unless it be Bertrum Troll.

For one thing, Bertrum is unbelievably strong. For another, he is almost indestructible, as Uriah witnessed himself when one particularly obnoxious customer took the troll to task with a sword while being ejected one oft-remembered evening. The troll was sorely damaged in the ensuing tussle but wondrously healed himself fully within the hour; by the following evening, he was seated in his favorite corner, sipping beer and eating pigs' feet as per normal. He certainly fared better than did the swordsman, who was hurled through a wall but lacked Bertrum's rapid regenerative powers.

A mere wrestling match (Uriah calls it a "wrastling match," as is customary in the locality) seems to Uriah to be no contest. He therefore sees no reason to actually pay out winnings he knows no one will be able to claim. But, just in case, he has forged 1,500 gp from lead, covered with a superior-quality gold paint, on the off chance that someone demands a look at the purse before the fight. The 500 gp he has in real money will have to cover bets and other expenses. No problem!

Rumors Abroad

After the PCs read the publicity flyer about the wrestling match, they may wish to find out more about the Rattlesnake Inn. The following items of information may be obtained from regulars at the inn, from other townspeople, or from anyone else the PCs meet who stays often in the town. The DM might further develop these rumors, allowing sources for possible future adventures to creep into the list. Some of the rumors listed are true, others are false. Assign them as desired or randomize using 1d12.

1. The Rattlesnake Inn is owned by Uriah Alekeep, who is unmarried at present, and who lives in a small room off the main bar. (True)

2. As an inn, the Rattlesnake leaves a lot to be desired. For one thing, lodgers must bed down on the rush-strewn floor; there are no regular bunks to sleep in. (True)

3. The bouncer at the Rattlesnake is a large, tame troll named Bertrum. He spends most of his time sitting in a corner near a door, sipping beer and eating pigs' feet. (True)

4. Bertrum Troll, chief-and-only bouncer at Rattlers, was given to the landlord, Uriah Alekeep, in lieu of money owed to him by an adventurer. Bertrum is slow witted but incredibly strong and seems to show a little loyalty to his master—as long as he's well fed. (True)

5. Uriah Alekeep, who owns Rattlers, isn't one to let an opportunity to earn a fast gold piece go astray. This wrestling match, though, is the biggest publicity stunt he's pulled so far. It promises to be packed in the inn on the night of the bout. (True)

6. The Rattlesnake is virtually a den

of thieves. It's not the kind of place to leave possessions unattended. (This is largely true. However, Rattlers has no direct connection with any thieves' guild.)

7. House rules in the competitions that are run at the Rattlesnake vary from night to night. One thing remains constant—the rules favor the house, not the challengers. (True. The combat rules for fighting the troll are weighted by Rattlers to let the superior strength of Bertrum have the advantage.)

8. Bertrum Troll is too slow witted to understand the meaning of "throwing" (purposely losing) a fight, so any bets placed will be won or lost honestly. (True)

9. The landlord of Rattlers has something up his sleeve; this "wrastling match" is too unusual a happening for him to arrange on his own. (Not exactly true. This piece of idle speculation may prove close to the mark, though, if Uriah manages to pull off this stunt without anyone being the wiser about his lack of a prize fund.)

10. You couldn't meet a more honest person than Uriah Alekeep, landlord at the Rattlesnake. (False. This piece of news is probably obtained from someone with a long line of credit at the inn.)

11. You couldn't meet a more devious, dishonest person than Uriah Alekeep. (This is a bit of an exaggeration. After all, Uriah isn't the *most* dishonest person in the world.)

12. Rattlers is owned by the local thieves' guild (commonly called the Mob), so it doesn't pay to cause trouble there. (False. There is no connection between Uriah's business and the local guild of thieves.)

So What Can Go Wrong?

The PCs may wish to have a representative of their group try his hand at the not-too-gentle art of "wrastling," or they may choose to be part of the audience. While the PCs may be fully entertained by either of these options, Uriah has other problems he thus far knows nothing about. In no particular order, these are Sherman's Bandits, Dudley Ambrose, and Minimin the Mage.

Far off in the wilds, the dwarven bandit Sherman Danglethumb heard news from one of his informers that a wrestling bout with a 2,000-gp purse is scheduled to take place at the Rattlesnake Inn. Sherman has little interest in the bout, but he has a substantial interest in the prize fund.

Known far and wide as a fearsome bandit, he has formulated a plan to capitalize on his reputation. He and his dwarves, disguised as miners and farmers, plan to arrive before the first bout and mingle with the crowd in a few strategic locations. Then, when the townsfolk are engrossed in the fight, he intends to take them unawares and make off with the gold while they are all suitably quivering. But the bandit leader is in for a couple of surprises because, in the middle of all this, a group of suspiciously short characters arrive and declare themselves none other than the fearsome Sherman's Dwarven Bandits!

Sherman Danglethumb, dwarven bandit leader: AL LE; AC 3; MV 6; F4; hp 46; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/97, D 16, C 18, I 11, W 13, Ch 15; ML 15; XP 270. Sherman wears chain mail and wields a footman's mace. Both are hidden beneath his peasant disguise, as are two large sacks and his ceramic bottle of *oil of slipperiness,* which he will hurl to the floor if necessary to cover his escape (the oil will spill out to magically cover a 12'-radius area).

Krundike, dwarven bandit lieutenant: AL LN; AC 1; MV 6; F3; hp 29; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 17, C 15, I 11, W 8, Ch 12; ML 14; XP 120. Krundike favors a short sword and wears chain mail under the clothing of a common miner. Concealed beneath a pack of rags on his back is a small shield and two large sacks, and he has a throwing dagger thrust inside each boot. In a pouch on his belt is flint and steel, with wood shavings and a vial of lamp oil for kindling a small fire.

Grublik, Nonpeft, Casder, Derman, and **Curbnit** (dwarven bandits): AL LE; AC 4; MV 6; F1; hp 12, 11, 9, 8, 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; C 16, other abilities unremarkable; ML 12; XP 35; each has a short sword, a sling, four sling stones, two large sacks, 20' of thin rope, a vial of lamp oil (if Krundike wants to start a large blaze), and a bottle of writing ink (for throwing in the faces of opponents—a successful hit with an open bottle on a victim within 30' has a 20% chance of blinding him for 1-4 rounds).

Dudley Ambrose is an enterprising halfling who relieves people of their possessions for a living. He is also given to odd ideas when it comes to tactics. When he heard about the prize money at Rattlers, he set about applying his inferior intellect to the problem of how to steal it from the inn. What else?! He would get his brothers, Sidney, Bundy, Alfie, and Reg to impersonate the infamous Sherman's Dwarven Bandits and make off with the prize fund while everyone tries to flee! (His *bag of tricks* could be used to cover his escape, too.)

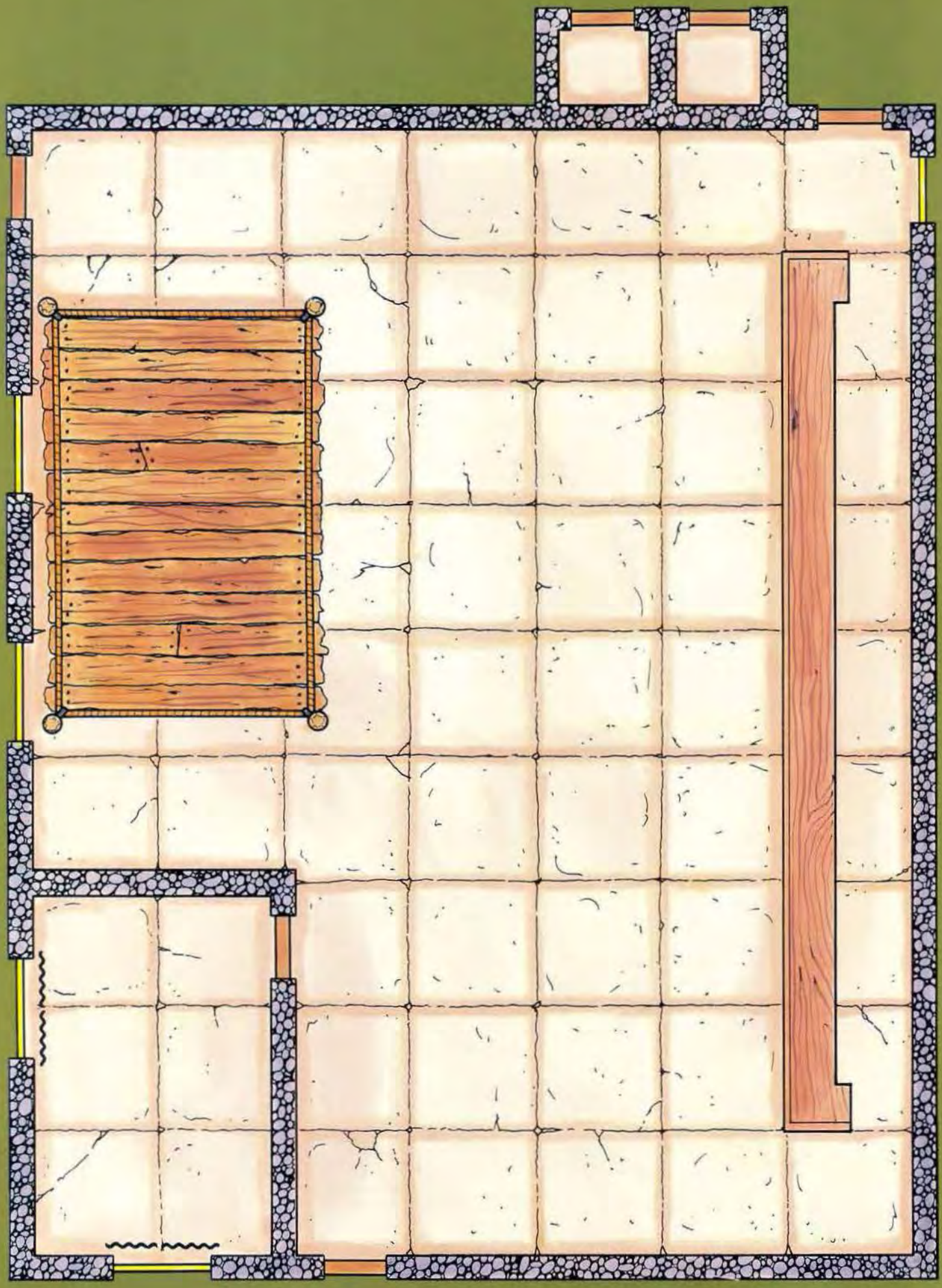
Dudley has been studiously combing false beards and sewing padding into everyone's clothing for the past couple of days and is convinced his plan is foolproof. He's another one who's in for a surprise!

Dudley Ambrose, halfling thief: AL NE; AC 4, MV 6; F4/T4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab at +4 to hit for double damage; S 16, D 18, C 15, I 9, W 7, Ch 14; PP 48%, OL 58%, FT 26%, MS 45%, HS 43%, DN 22%, CW 55%, RL 48%; ML 13; XP 270; short sword, leather armor, *bag of tricks* (type A bag, as per page 160 of the 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide,* but roll 1d4, not 1d8, for results; only the first four animals will appear).

Sidney, Bundy, Alfie, and **Reg Ambrose:** AL NE; AC 8; MV 6; F1; hp 9, 7, 6, 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; abilities unremarkable; ML 10; XP 15 each; each has leather armor, a club, a large sack, and a small sack full of food.

Minimin the mage felt something go click in his brain when the flyer he was handed in town mentioned a 2,000-gp prize fund, because that was the precise amount he needed to repay the Moneylenders' Guild the debt they were beginning to remind him of every three days. It wasn't that he didn't want to repay them, of course. It was just that their tendency to be careless of debtors' body parts was upsetting his concentration on earning the money through any of his regular schemes. He had even considered pawning his *horn of uncontrollable striding and springing* to cover his debt, and was actually on the way to the pawnbroker when Uriah's flyer came his way. The solution was so simple! All he had to do was wait until the bout was in full swing, blow the magical horn, and make off with the moneybag while everyone in the tavern was jumping madly about the place.

Minimin: AL N; AC 10; MV 12; W3; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; dagger, *horn of uncontrol-*



A WRASTLE WITH BERTRUM

BY WILLIE WALSH

A little bet, a little bout,
a chance to trash
a tavern out.

Customer #9

Customer #8

Customer #7

Customer #6

Customer #5

Customer #4

Customer #3

Customer #2

Customer #1

Minimin (disguised)

Minimin the Wizard

Customer #14

Customer #13

Customer #12

Customer #11

Customer #10

Dudley Ambrose, halfling thief

Dudley Ambrose (disguised)

Sidney Ambrose, halfling thief

Sidney Ambrose (disguised)

Bundy Ambrose, halfling thief

Bundy Ambrose (disguised)

Sherman Danglethumb, dwarven bandit

Krundike, dwarven bandit

Grublik, dwarven bandit

Nonpeft, dwarven bandit

Casder, dwarven bandit

Derman, dwarven bandit

Curbnit, dwarven bandit

Reg Ambrose, halfling thief

Reg Ambrose (disguised)

Alfie Ambrose, halfling thief

Alfie Ambrose (disguised)

Bertrum Troll

Uriah Alekeep

lable striding and springing (see sidebar); spells memorized: *change self, hold portal, misdirection.*

The Rules of the Game

Here are the competition rules in force at the Rattlesnake Inn on the night of the bout:

The bout is a "wrastling match," not a melee or gladiatorial contest, so no weapons may be carried into the ring or fired from the sidelines. "Wrastling" includes any and all forms of unarmed combat, from wrestling and boxing to Oriental martial arts. "Weapons" also include lit torches and any other sort of fiery object, mugs of beer, flasks of oil, jugs of soap, buckets of slops, etc.

No armor or shields are permitted. *Bracers of defense* are considered to be armor; a *cloak* or *ring of protection* is not armor and may be worn to the benefit of a competitor.

Competitors may use magic to increase their chances of success, but spells are limited to the likes of *cure light wounds* and *cure serious wounds*, and any spells that increase the to-hit and damage-inflicting power of the combatant. Area-effect spells like *fireball* or *stinking cloud* are not permitted, nor are offensive spells such as *lightning bolt*, for obvious reasons. All spells must be cast during the breaks between rounds (see the following), though spells that continue to take effect over a period of rounds (*chant*, for example) are allowed.

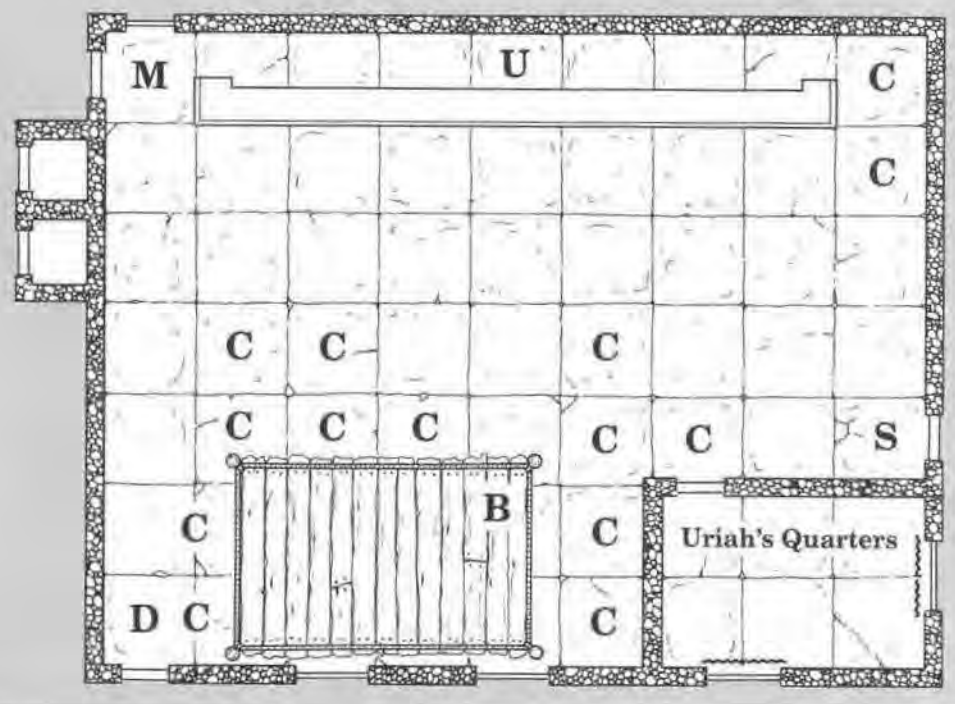
A wrestling round at Rattlers consists of seven minutes of combat; Bertrum is allowed 25 minutes rest between bouts, during which he *regenerates* to his full hit-point total. The combat continues until one side gives up, is reduced to 0 hp or less (is knocked unconscious), or is killed. There can be no draw, so withdrawing from the ring, running away, or otherwise avoiding a fight means automatic loss of the bout.

Unless Oriental martial arts are brought into play, the following rules apply. At the beginning of the bout and each round thereafter, each side rolls initiative as usual. The winner rolls to hit the unarmored armor class of his opponent. Any applicable bonuses, normal or magical, are added. If a hit is made, check the "Punching and Wrestling Results" table on either page 97 of the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* or page 59 of the 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide* to see what movement and damage the successful roll indicates. Moves marked with an asterisk may be held from round to round until broken. To break a hold, a combatant must roll a successful Throw or Gouge result. Holds maintained from round to round inflict 1 hp damage per round, cumulatively: 1 hp in the first round, 2 hp in the second, 3 hp in the third, and so on.

All successful wrestling moves inflict 1 hp damage plus the attacker's strength bonus. Twenty-five per cent of the damage is actual; 75% is temporary. Anyone reduced to 0 hp is knocked out and forfeits the match. If Bertrum is reduced to −3 hp or less, he is knocked out for one full round and considered defeated. However, Bertrum must pass an intelligence check on 1d20 (he has a 5 intelligence) each round thereafter to realize from the shouting in the inn that he should stop fighting. Bertrum Troll is not affected by knock-out or stunning attacks from hand-to-hand combat (he regenerates such damage too quickly).

Uriah Alekeep offers the following

THE RATTLESNAKE TAVERN



odds on opponents fighting Bertrum Troll. All bets must be placed before the first round of a bout, and only one opponent at a time may enter the competition; no tag teams are allowed:

Bertrum Troll	4/6
Tall, strong, skilled opponent	4/1
Strong, skilled, human opponent	5/2
Strong human opponent	10/1
Average human opponent	16/1
Weak human opponent	20/1
Weak, novice, human opponent	25/1
Small, weak, novice opponent	33/1

The use of magic boosts the odds in favor of the opponent by one step. If the opponent is of a smaller-than-man-sized race (dwarf, gnome, halfling, etc.), reduce the odds one step.

The customers, competitors, and PCs may bet money only (copper, silver, gold, etc.) but not goods. The maximum bet accepted is 50 gp; the minimum is 1 cp.

Rattlers' Regulars

Bertrum Troll: INT low (5); AL CN; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 36; THAC0 13; #AT 3 (1 while wrestling); Dmg 5-8/5-8/5-12 (use +3/+6 strength bonuses when wrestling); SA severed limbs attack (not applicable while wrestling), +2 missile adjustment with thrown customer (range 30'; treat windows and doors as AC 6 to hit; damage done as per "Choreography" section); SD *regenerate* 3 hp per round (except from fire and acid damage), immune to *fear*, 90' infravision, 80% to climb obstacles; SZ L (8' tall, not full grown); ML 14; XP 1,400; MC. For purposes of wrestling, Bertrum has a strength of 18/00 from his feeding and care at the Rattlesnake Inn.

The troll is quite tame unless ordered to fight by Uriah or moderately provoked. He is trained not to bite or use his normal trollish claw attacks in the ring, but if a regular melee breaks out or if fire, acid, or sharp weapons are used on him, Bertrum will use all the attacks at his disposal. He is capable of lifting and hurling large objects like tables up to 24' away for 3-10 hp damage. Outside the ring, he's not too friendly to strangers, and he takes his job as ejector quite seriously.

Uriah Alekeep: AL CN; AC 8; MV 12; F2; hp 15; #AT 1; THAC0 19; Dmg by weapon type; S 15, D 16, C 15, I 10, W 9, Ch 18; ML 13; club.

The innkeeper is an affable character, given to long bouts of contemplation on where he's going to come up with his next scam. Though not rich, he has got 500 gp in the kitty on the off chance that the troll is beaten once. He hovers about uncertainly, splitting his time between serving customers and trying to keep an eye on the fight. There is a possibility that a PC will notice the tiniest look of relief on Uriah's face when Sherman's bandits declare they're taking the moneybag.

Assorted customers: AL varies; AC 10; MV 12; zero-level humans; hp 5-8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); abilities unremarkable; ML 11.

A minimum of 14 of these NPCs will be present to get in everyone's way or act as living ammunition for the troll. The customers will react in barroom-brawl fashion once hostilities break out. None of them will dare to wrestle Bertrum, except for 2-4 foolhardy souls with the following statistics:

Potential "wrastlers": AL varies; AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 10; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); S 16, other statistics unremarkable; ML 13.

Setting the Scene

Place the colored players' map on the table and refer to the black-and-white DM's map to set the positions of the NPCs. Presumably, the PCs will be standing or sitting somewhere near the wrestling ring while the bout is in progress, but allow the players to place their markers wherever they wish. Uriah will not allow customers behind the counter nor standing on the bar.

The starting positions of each of the major NPCs is marked on the DM's map:

Bertrum Troll (**B**) begins the bout from this corner of the wrestling ring.

Uriah Alekeep (**U**) stands behind the bar on a 3'-tall raised wooden catwalk, serving drinks and watching the moneybag hidden beneath the counter.

Sherman's Bandits (**S**) enter through this doorway and mingle strategically with the crowd.

Dudley Ambrose (**D**) and family burst in through this door.

Minimin (**M**) is sipping watery beer at this end of the bar to judge his moment before dodging outside to cast a *change self* spell as a disguise. He will use his *horn of uncontrollable striding and springing* while *changed.*

The inn's typical customers (**C**) stand about, discussing the upcoming fight and debating the merits of the local contestants. None are armed, though they may (at the DM's discretion or with encouragement from the PCs) use bottles or fists indiscriminately if a melee breaks out. The DM should pick out which customers are potential wrestlers, as noted earlier, and keep special track of these unusually rowdy souls.

Choreography

This section is a rough guide to how the action might proceed. The DM should take into account the actions of the PCs, who are notorious for fouling up set-piece play. Adjust the reactions of the NPCs according to PC meddling.

A PC wrestles Bertrum in the ring, with suitable cheering and catcalling from the audience and his friends. If no PC wishes to participate, the DM should describe how one of the local "wrastlers" gets on with Bertrum. Either option should last a few rounds—possibly to the point where there's a winner—before the next action takes place.

Sherman's Bandits, mingling with the crowd, declare themselves and demand the takings and the prize fund. The customers look suitably abashed, and the PCs may do what they like.

Dudley's group arrives with much "ho-ho-ho-ing" and declares itself Sherman's Bandits. Someone in the crowd sniggers, which signals the eruption of a huge brawl. False beards and halflings fly about the room.

In the absence of other instructions, Bertrum wades into the nearest customer (NPC or PC) and tries to eject him through the nearest door or window, or use him as a missile against the nearest armed group (50% chance of either action). PCs may take whatever action they deem appropriate.

While the brawl is going on, Uriah cowers under the bar, vaguely waving a cudgel at no one in particular. The DM should allow two or three rounds of melee and general chaos for dramatic effect before Minimin blows his *horn of uncontrollable striding and springing.* Everyone in earshot who fails a saving throw vs. spells leaps madly about the place (including all affected PCs and NPCs; the DM should rearrange the figures accordingly).

It is possible to jump out a window, jump into a solid wall (knocking off more of Uriah's plaster), jump on top of another customer, jump over the bar, or jump anywhere else judged to be the most funny or inconvenient location.

Damage from collisions is optional. If a character leaps onto another who is brandishing a weapon, he may take damage equal to a successful hit by that weapon (half damage if a saving throw vs. paralysis is successful). Jumping or being thrown through a window does 1-2 hp damage, being propelled through a closed door does 1-4 hp damage, and being thrown into a wall does 1-6 hp damage. Damage is modified by the troll's strength bonus, if he throws someone about.

During the chaos caused by his horn, Minimin attempts to grab the moneybag, which he has figured out is hidden beneath the bar. If Uriah hasn't been a victim of any of the NPCs, PCs, or the horn, Minimin hits him with a stool to get at the bag. If the mage cannot reach the bag, the nearest noncombative NPC grabs at it and tries to carry it away through the nearest unhindered door or window. The PCs may stay behind or pursue, as circumstances allow.

Concluding the Adventure

If someone successfully escapes with the moneybag, Uriah makes the most of his loss, spouting suitable epithets about ruin and pauperism. He's secretly glad no one got an opportunity to see that most of the money was fake.

The PCs are allowed six months' free room and (nonalcoholic) board if they try to rescue the innkeeper's gold. If the adventurers succeed in rounding up, killing, or incapacitating any (or all) of Sherman's Bandits, they receive a reward of 50 gp each per bandit, or 500 gp for Sherman himself. Any surviving dwarven bandits are herded into the town jail to await trial.

Horn of Uncontrollable Striding and Springing

This magical wind instrument looks like a normal hunting horn but radiates abjuration magic. Its effects become apparent as soon as it is sounded, as everyone except the person using it, must save vs. spells or jump madly about the place for one full round. Jumps are magically lengthened to let someone leap up to 20' from a standing start, or 30' if running or walking. The direction of the jump is determined at random by the DM and may be a vertical, horizontal, diagonal, or any other direction, as circumstances dictate.

The area of effect of the horn is a 60'-radius circle, centered on the horn. Those within this circle who save vs. spells are immune to the effects of the horn until it is again winded.

Due to the quickness of movement of a victim, his armor class actually improves by 1 (for example, a character with AC 10 becomes AC 9 while affected by a *horn of uncontrollable striding and springing*), but attacks made by a victim are at −1 to −10 to hit, based on a roll made by the DM on 1d10.

The horn holds five charges, one of which is expended each time the horn is blown. It may be recharged at a cost of 1,000 gp per charge, by any wizard of 11th level or greater using a *jump* spell.

XP Value: 2,000

As for Dudley's clan, each PC receives 20 gp per halfling either killed or captured, and a fee of 350 gp if Dudley himself is also in the group.

Although removing Minimin from the scene has no reward value in Xylon (he has no prior criminal record), getting him behind bars or otherwise stopping him will be rewarded by the town authorities, who reduce all (legally) available services in the town to 75% of normal prices for the next 30 days in appreciation of the party's help.

If a PC manages to make off with the moneybag, the DM must follow up as he sees fit. As only 500 gp of the coins are real, the other 1,500 lead forgeries are likely to land the character trying to spend them in jail for 1-6 months. Also, if the PCs were seen stealing the moneybag, Uriah will make sure he exaggerates the amount stolen so that a price is placed on their heads.

Further Adventures

If Sherman's Bandits succeed in stealing the moneybag, the town authorities may hire the PCs to track them to their hideout in the wilds and bring them back—dead or alive. If any of the bandits escape without the prize fund, due to PC interference, they may choose to take their revenge on the adventurers at a later date. Possible fates for the PCs are an ambush in the wilderness, attempted kidnapping to be sold into slavery, or other nasty ends the DM might think up.

It's possible that some PC will wonder if Sherman's Bandits had any treasure in their hideout (the location of which is known only to the bandits, who would rather die than reveal it). Hunting for the hideout and dealing with the dwarven guards and clever traps there could be very entertaining.

Minimin may also try to take revenge on the PCs if he escapes without the moneybag. If the adventurers have any noticeable treasure or magical items, he may attempt to steal them to pay off his debt to the Moneylenders' Guild, leading him into further conflict with the PCs.

Dudley and the rest of the Ambrose clan may also take offense at the failure of their wonderful plan (undoubtedly foiled by the PCs' being in the bar, not by the fact it was a hair-brained scheme). Even if Dudley and the rest don't escape to meet the PCs again, they're bound to have many more cousins, uncles, aunts, and other relations, all willing to carry a vendetta against the slayers or capturers of their kin.

Dudley's group also has a secret hideout that he will refuse to reveal, but Dudley's four brothers will sing like canaries the instant they are questioned, in hopes of avoiding torture or (worse) starvation. Their hideout is unoccupied except for an extraordinary number of wild dogs that the halflings have befriended. The dogs attack anyone who is not a halfling.

Then, of course, there's Uriah Alekeep and his many money-making schemes. How about the PCs being handed another flyer, next time they're in Xylon:

Come One! Come All!
See the wonderful knife-throwing Troupe of Blades at the Rattlesnake Inn. Admission 1 silver piece!

In tiny print at the bottom of each flyer are these immortal words:

Absolutely no responsibility for any loss or damage to customers at the Rattlesnake Inn can be borne by the management. Ω

Continued from page 30

status, she expects to be treated with respect. This is a role-playing problem, but not a difficult one if the PCs just grin and bear it. Any abusive behavior toward Boudicea will be reported to the Despotrix, and the PCs will be arrested soon after they reach Hardby. However, their only punishment will be a stern lecture on good manners. This lenience is given only because the PCs carried out a difficult task at great risk.

The Tareg will attempt to find out who invaded their fort but will discover little about the invaders if the PCs keep quiet. If the adventurers brag about their exploits, however, the Tareg will learn who they are and what they did. Otherwise, there is only a 5% chance that the Tareg will learn the PCs' names. If they do discover the identities of Boudicea's rescuers, the Tareg will retaliate, attacking the PCs in their homes, kidnapping their relatives for ransom, etc. Details are left to the DM.

Finally, if the PCs manage to completely take over the fortress, they will have gained a unique base from which to mount further expeditions into the wilderness—if they can hold onto the fortress when the allies of the overthrown Tareg find out about it. Ω

THIONDAR'S LEGACY

BY STEVEN KURTZ

One step away from godhood—and damnation.

Artwork by Jim Holloway

Steve is a 23-year-old grad student studying orthopaedic biomechanics at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He dedicates this adventure to his wife, Karen, for putting up with the interminable hours he spends on Visions *Magazine, gaming, and studies. He also promises that he will* never *write anything this large again.*

"Thiondar's Legacy" is an AD&D® adventure for 4-7 neutral-or good-aligned player characters of levels 8-12 (about 55 total levels). The party should be well equipped for a long dungeon expedition and include an experienced priest and a wizard, at least one of whom is fluent in Elvish. A bard or other character with the nonweapon proficiencies of ancient languages and history would be helpful as well. This module can be used independently or can be incorporated into an ongoing campaign by setting it in a large forest and adjacent snow-capped mountain range. This module describes specific events in the past history of the elves (the time of the elf-drow wars and the origins of the gray elves) which may need to be altered if they do not agree with the circumstances in the DM's campaign.

This module might not be the best choice for a party that likes to hack and slash its way through an adventure. Many of the encounters can be lethal for even powerful groups of adventurers, and in many cases some talking, clever action, or a hasty retreat is the best approach. The adventure begins when all the party members are visiting Beryl, a city with a population of 12,000.

Adventure Background

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Few cities can compare with the wealth and beauty of Beryl. Founded along with its great university nearly a thousand years ago, the city has grown and benefitted from the merging of cultures. In the protective shadow of the university, Beryl has become a center of elven and human commerce, attracting the attention of scholars and merchants for the past two centuries. Nestled in the heart of the vast Val Forest and adorning the shores of the Silver Lake, Beryl has attracted you with its reputation of splendor and intrigue.

Beryl has four sights of interest to the tourist or PC. Beryl's first attraction is its amazing array of shops and boutiques. Candles, cloth, furniture, paper, spices, medicine, pottery, oil, perfume, potions, elixirs, books, scrolls, chests, boxes, gems, jewelry, weapons, armor, poison, and even gunpowder can all be obtained in Beryl for the right price.

Beryl has also gained international acclaim for its architecture. Much of Beryl has been zoned for the private residences of extremely wealthy merchants and aristocrats, who have devoted fortunes to the appearance of their homes. There are no narrow, twisting streets in Beryl, only straight, wide, tree-lined boulevards kept meticulously clean of trash and regularly punctuated with white marble benches, carriage blocks, and hitching posts. Many of the boulevards pour into large parks—the pride of Beryl's elven inhabitants—where small, intimate paths wind under moss-drooping trees and across the occasional tamed stream.

This city of merchants, parks, and boulevards dwells in the tall shadow of the renowned University of Beryl. Since its founding, the university has expanded until it covers a quarter of the inner city with the campuses of its five colleges: the College of Art and Architecture, the College of Alchemy, the College of Engineering, the College of Antiquity, and the university's first school, the College of Magi. For centuries, the university has been the focus of countless intrigues and scandals. When the PCs arrive in Beryl, they find the city talking about the latest power play within the university.

Recently, the arch-chancellor of the university died, and before his 400-year-old body had cooled, the chancellors of the five colleges gathered to elect a new arch-chancellor. Leopold, the half-elven chancellor of the College of Antiquity, considered himself the most eligible for the position, but another chancellor was unexpectedly elevated to the coveted position.

Leopold was so furious that he invoked one of his college's most feared privileges, the Right to Inventory. According to an obscure law, the College of Antiquity has the right, once per century, to take an inventory of the all of the university's holdings. Since this effort usually takes 10 years and requires the services of half the employees from each college, the inventory is universally regarded as an incredible nuisance, to be avoided at all costs. Unfortunately, the other chancellors of the university were powerless to stop Leopold's protracted revenge.

Several weeks ago, while working in the chancellors' dining hall, a worker took down an old round shield for classification. The ancient padding and arm straps fell away, revealing hidden runes and inscriptions. This shield was soon brought to Leopold's attention, and the chancellor has been trying to hire adventurers ever since.

Once the PCs enter Beryl, they will undoubtedly notice a large placard posted on the centrally located town hall, advertising "a once-in-a-lifetime chance for fame and fortune, a quest for the riches and magic of a lost elven nation." Those interested are directed to Chancellor Leopold's offices at the university. If the PCs don't seem too interested at first but mention the notice at inns and taverns, they discover that rumors about the source of employment are rampant. For every hour spent investigating, roll 1d4 and consult the following table.

1. Chancellor Leopold is slightly demented, and this is just one of his usual fits of unpredictability. It's a wonder he hasn't been removed from office. (False)
2. The chancellor has discovered a map to incredible wealth. (True)
3. This is a hoax to drive up the price of adventuring gear and to stir up intrigue in the city. (False)
4. The chancellor's quest involves an ancient artifact or relic. (True)

Sooner or later, the PCs should make an appointment to see Leopold. When the party arrives, they are carefully screened by Nina, Leopold's receptionist, before they can make an appointment (there's no sense wasting the chancellor's valuable time on obviously unqualified adventurers). The DM is encouraged to play up this encounter, perhaps by passing out "Adventurer Employment Forms" or quizzing the PCs about their past accomplishments and qualifications ("Can you speak or read Elvish?").

Overworked and underpaid, Nina does not have the time to waste on incompetents and treats the PCs as such until they can demonstrate otherwise (through the art of diplomacy, of course). Eventually, Nina gets out her little black appointment book and announces an opening to see the chancellor that very afternoon.

Nina (receptionist): AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level human; hp 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1 (unarmed); Dmg by weapon type; ML 15. No matter what the PCs say, do, or look like, Nina looks bored and unimpressed. After working at the university for 32 years, she's seen it all.

Leopold (chancellor): AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; M14; hp 25; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 7, D 10, C 9, I 17, W 14, Ch 13; ML 13; spells: *detect magic, hold portal, light, read magic, unseen servant, detect invisibility, knock, protection from cantrips, rope trick, wizard lock, dispel magic, hold person, item, non-detection, tongues, magic mirror, remove curse, stoneskin, wizard eye, hold monster, passwall, true seeing;* two decorative but functional darts (175 gp each) on belt, rich blue robes (1,200 gp), golden medallion and chain (530 gp), two engraved gold rings with diamonds (420 gp each).

When the PCs return later that day, Nina ushers them into the chancellor's office. The walls are covered with ancient maps mounted in frames and covered with glass. From behind his tidy desk, Leopold rises and introduces himself as the chancellor of the College of Antiquity. He announces that he has an ancient mystery to solve and relates the following tale:

"Thousands of years ago, this continent was recovering from the great elven wars that drove the drow below ground. A large elven tribe called the Ch'thar had been wandering lost in the frozen highlands north of the Val Forest for weeks when their lord, King Thiondar, saw a warm valley in a dream. The next day, they stumbled into an easily ignored mountain pass and were amazed to discover a lush tropical valley in the heart of the frozen waste.

"What happened in that valley remains a mystery to this date. We can only speculate that a horrible tragedy befell Thiondar. Perhaps he wakened a terrible monster or uncovered a dangerous artifact. From ancient elven histories, we can glean the following: A week after the Ch'thar's arrival, most of the tribe departed the valley and adopted a new name, the Elves of Gray. Following decades of wandering, the gray elves at last discovered the Val

PLAYERS' AREA MAP

Forest and ceased their long journeys. Millennia passed in tranquility, and the sagas of the wars and the wanderings slowly passed from the forefront of gray-elven minds.

"One day, an ancient elf named Anachrin Anias dragged himself into the court of the king of gray elves and claimed that he was the last of the Ch'thar. Anachrin died soon after his arrival at court, and his possessions were studied closely by the king. Among them, the elven monarch discovered a magical shield. A warrior by training, the king was inspecting the straps of the shield for defects when he discovered a crude map and the fragments of two phrases etched into the back of the shield, cleverly hidden beneath the padding. The king sent Anachrin's shield to the most powerful and discreet elven wizard to decipher the hidden map and message, but on the way the delegation was attacked by a large band of orcs, and the shield was lost.

"One thousand years ago, the high-elven wizard Thanmar—the famous founder of the College of Magi and this prestigious university—discovered the shield in the hoard of an ancient red dragon. Who knows how it got there? Oblivious to the map and message hidden beneath the shield's padding, he hung it in the chancellors' dining hall as a trophy and completely forgot all about it. The secret of Anachrin's shield remained hidden through many Inventories until recently. The padding on the back of the shield was so old that it fell apart when the shield was taken down from the wall.

"The elves, an extremely lore-conscious race, have recorded much of the history of their people, enough for us to learn about the founding of the gray elven kingdom and the visit of Anachrin Anias. Much of their travels through the frozen north country have been described in surprising detail as well, but the elven historians never recorded what befell their people in that valley where their tribe was split and King Thiondar was lost. Everything linked to that valley remains a mystery to this day."

For effect, the chancellor leads the party into a strongroom where he has stored the shield of Anachrin Anias safely behind a *wall of force*. Leopold entreats the PCs to undertake a quest to find the valley of the Ch'thar for the sake of furthering scholarly knowledge. If the chance to solve one of the continent's most ancient of secrets is not enough incentive for the PCs to accept, Leopold points out that the adventurers can keep any and all treasure they recover from the valley, including any magical items they may discover. Leopold also furnishes the PCs with a rubbing of the map and phrases on the back of the shield.

In exchange for all this, Leopold has several expectations from the PCs:

—The PCs agree to be responsible for any expenditures or damages they may incur on this expedition.

—The PCs agree to allow the College of Antiquity to copy any writings or manuscripts recovered from the valley, provided that such copying will not destroy the original (as is the case for some magical books and scrolls).

—The PCs agree to allow the College of Antiquity to study, sketch, and *identify* any objects of historical or archaeological importance recovered from the valley.

—The PCs agree to offer any items for sale to the college first before they offer them to outside buyers.

—The PCs agree to turn over any magical artifacts or relics they may recover to the College of Antiquity.

If the party agrees to these terms, Leopold asks each member to sign a document, agreeing to abide by the terms outlined above. Those who sign the paper are bound to its fulfillment by a *geas* (no saving throw since they voluntarily signed the document). If the PCs attempt to violate the spirit of the document, they begin to feel the negative affects of the *geas* at once. As a rule, if the PCs even wonder if an action will violate the terms of the document, there is a good chance that it will. Once the document is signed, Leopold hands over the rubbing of the shield and wishes the party good luck.

For the Dungeon Master

Although Leopold is a 14th-level wizard, he is by no means all powerful and omniscient, or obviously he would conduct the expedition himself. Due to the poisonous political atmosphere in Beryl and the responsibilities of his position, he is forced to rely upon adventurers to solve the historical mystery and gather any ancient writings for him. Nonetheless, the successful completion of the adventure by the PCs will bring Leopold considerable attention and augment his reputation as chancellor. Any writings recovered will be copied and added to the college's already famous library. It will be a public relations victory for the study of ancient history, for Leopold, and for his college—all of which will no doubt look good the next time an arch-chancellor is elected.

Although Leopold will not discuss the matter with the PCs, the chancellor has already enlisted one other party in his service. Led by Dirk Derlith, a crafty renegade wizard and rogue, this expedition departed from Beryl three weeks ago and hasn't been heard from since. (Fragmented and trapped by the dangers in the valley, Dirk's unlucky party awaits discovery and aid by the PCs.)

Even though the chancellor is silent on the subject, the city is awash with information about this expedition. For every hour spent gathering clues about their competitors, the PCs can learn one

of the following pieces of information (roll 1d6):

1. A previous expedition, led by Dirk Derlith, departed three weeks ago.
2. Dirk Derlith is a wizard and a rogue who never joined the College of Magi. He's a tricky but cheerful man with a good sense of humor.
3. Dirk convinced Ellana, Beryl's high priestess of Athena, to accompany him on his expedition. There are rumors that this pair have been steady friends for over 15 years.
4. Dirk frequently travels with a close friend, Francis Nightchaser, the famous bard.
5. Francis Nightchaser is a famous bard from Beryl who is a scholar of elven and giantish lore.
6. Dirk travels with a somber warrior named Baine and a rugged female barbarian named Khirsa. It is unknown why a barbarian would consort with a wizard of such power, but the reason is no doubt personal.

The above statements are all true, but the DM is encouraged to think up a few false ones, if desired.

The Stone of Gul and Thiondar

In the distant past, long before the rise of man and the creation of dwarves and gnomes, giants ruled the surface of the continent and worshiped many gods. One of giants' deities, a young and rash demigod named Gul, provoked the terrible wars that fragmented the giants into separate races and created the mutant ettins, cyclopes, and fomorians. As punishment for his terrible deed, the deities of the giants stripped Gul of most of his powers and imprisoned his soul forever in a 2,500-lb. ruby. Unwilling to destroy another immortal being, the gods of the giants deposited this prison in the heart of a mountain and tried to forget about Gul. Near the mountain, the gods raised a temple to commemorate their deed and to warn mortals to beware the terrible Gul.

The Stone of Gul is a relic of awesome and formidable power. Designed especially for its immortal prisoner, who was once a deity of flame and travel, the Stone drains the magical and spiritual abilities from Gul and shunts them into the nearby environment. The Stone drains Gul's most powerful immortal powers, using them to *teleport* a nearby

The Stone of Gul

The history of this potent and dangerous relic of giantish manufacture can be found in "For the Dungeon Master" at the beginning of the adventure. The specific powers of the Stone of Gul are detailed below.

If a spell-caster spends but eight hours meditating in the presence of the Stone, he can learn how to invoke some of its further powers at the 20th level of ability: *fireball* (three times per day), *fire charm* (once per day), *levitate* (at will), *dimension door* (once per week), *control weather* (once per week), and *earthquake* (once per week). Spending one day pondering the mystical energies of the Stone will permanently raise a spell-caster's intelligence by one point due to the close contact with a work of divine genius.

In addition, the Stone has the ability to inspire a spell-caster to create a new work of magic. For every day spent in meditation in front of the Stone, there is a 1% cumulative chance that the spell-caster will be imparted with a burst of genius and understand all the steps to manufacture a magical item or research a spell. If the character is inspired, roll percentile dice and consult the following table:

%	Inspiration
01-35	Spell
36-45	Ring
46-50	Rod
51-60	Staff
61-70	Wand
71-90	Miscellaneous magical item
91-95	Miscellaneous magical weapon
96-00	Armor

The specific item or spell can be determined by using the spell tables in the *PH* (pages 126-128) or the magical-item tables in the *DMG* (pages 135-140). An inspiration will result in a 100% chance of success and one-quarter the time and expense required in research for the particular item or spell. However, the knowledge gained by the inspiration lasts for only as many months as the spell-caster has points of intelligence, and a recipient cannot be visited by more than one inspiration at a time. If the inspiration is not or cannot be immediately acted upon (perhaps because the spell-caster receives inspiration for a spell beyond his ability), the spell-caster will never be able to enchant the item or research the spell, no matter how much time and effort are expended. Furthermore, the inspiration is a gut feeling, a hunch, an indescribable instinct to complete the item or spell. It cannot be translated into words and can never be written down. Tampering with divine insight has its dangers.

For every day spent meditating in front of the Stone, there is a 5% cumulative chance that the spell-caster will be afflicted with one of three major forms of permanent insanity. If the PC fails a wisdom check, roll percentile dice and consult the following table:

01-40 *Delusional Insanity:* The character becomes utterly convinced that he is the demigod Gul and will be violently upset if any mortals around him do not recognize his divine status. The PC will otherwise act in a normal manner.

41-90 *Split Personality:* The character develops an additional personality that is chaotic and evil. Every day, there is a 1-in-6 chance of the personality emerging; this chance becomes 1-in-6 per round in stressful situations (like combat). The new personality makes up a new name for itself but retains the old personality's abilities. It is perfectly aware of its other self and despises it, but will not commit suicide.

91-00 *Feeblemind:* The character behaves as if he were the victim of the 5th-level wizard spell.

A character can be afflicted with but one form of insanity; the condition can be reversed only by a *wish* or *restoration* spell cast at the 20th level.

Finally, the relic seeks its own preservation at any price. Once a character has been granted a point of intelligence by the Stone, he becomes extremely protective of the relic and desires to spend all of his available time in its presence. The stone's new guardian will attempt to destroy any whom he perceives as wanting to harm the Stone, and will allow no one to approach it.

Since effective protectors are hard to find, the Stone has the ability to halt its guardian's aging (and all need for nourishment and rest). Should the protector be separated from the Stone (by more than a mile) for over a day, the character returns to his normal physical age and starved condition. After 10-40 years have passed in the service of the Stone, the protector becomes increasingly paranoid and forgets his previous name, instead referring to himself as "The Keeper."

river in an endless loop and to heat a nearby valley. The further powers of the relic are detailed in the sidebar.

Millennia passed, and the climate of the mountain range gradually became colder, except for the valley warmed by the Stone. When the Ch'thar discovered the valley, King Thiondar found an opening at the base of the tallest mountain at the south of the valley. Intrigued, he descended beneath the mountain and discovered the Stone of Gul.

As the king (a powerful wizard) studied and tested the relic, he fell into its power and became insane. Thiondar emerged from the mountain a week later to tell his worried subjects that the Ch'thar would be settling in the valley. He ordered the Ch'thar to build a town, while he returned to guard what he now considered *his* relic.

It was plain to all of the elves that something had befallen their leader. Lioshand, the king's champion, followed the king into the mountain and witnessed Thiondar meditating in the presence of a huge glowing ruby. Lioshand confronted the king about the relic, whereupon Thiondar, deranged by the power of the Stone, accused him of treason and slew him with magic. The king emerged from the mountain to denounce his faithless subjects and to pronounce a horrible curse on Lioshand's soul. Thiondar repeated his order for the Ch'thar to build a town, and again returned to the mountain to guard the relic.

As soon as Thiondar left, the Ch'thar began to argue bitterly among themselves. They speculated about what Thiondar had found under the mountain, which was soon named King's Mountain by the elves. Many despised the king's actions, for they knew that Lioshand had always protected the king and acted out of concern for Thiondar's safety. Even more hated the environment of the valley, which was filled with a dark rain forest and populated with great reptiles.

The dissenters—nearly a thousand strong—left the valley and called themselves the gray elves. Ashamed for their king's unjust behavior, their own weakness, and their cowardly escape, the gray elves never documented what happened in the valley and retain their somber name to this day.

A few hundred of the Ch'thar remained in the valley, some out of loyalty, some out of fear. Inspired by the divine intelligence in the Stone, Thiondar devised two wards to prevent interruption from the outside world. As the centuries passed and Thiondar's insanity developed, he ordered all of the Ch'thar to settle inside King's Mountain.

Thiondar began experimenting with the powers of the Stone, and in doing so diverted energy from the relic's original tasks. As a result, the valley became too cold to support a rain forest. As the millennia passed, the swampy valley dried up and all the water settled in a lake at the foot of King's Mountain. Time soon eroded the Ch'thar's abandoned buildings in the valley, and the entrance to the caverns under King's Mountain became partially flooded with water from the lake. The PCs will find the valley to be much different from when it was discovered by Thiondar and the Ch'thar many thousands of years ago.

If the PCs consult a sage (for a fee of no less than 500 gp), they might learn some details about the valley of the Ch'thar. When Anachrin Anias arrived at the court of the gray elves with the shield and map, some of his discussions about the valley were written down by historians. These original manuscripts all disappeared mysteriously after the death of Anachrin, but some historians refer to them sketchily in a few of their works. There is a 75% chance that a sage will discover one of these histories referring to missing transcripts of Anachrin's conversations.

The histories state that the valley was populated with huge lizards when the elven tribe arrived. The Ch'thar could not bear to dwell amid such monsters, so they quarreled among themselves before most of the tribe departed. There is a 50% chance that a sage will discover a reference to the death and betrayal of Lioshand, Thiondar's champion. The history says that the betrayal was related to the exodus of the elves from the valley but neglects to reveal how the two events were related.

There is a 30% chance that a sage will discover that a reference to the valley of the Ch'thar matches an allusion to a relic of giantish manufacture, called the Stone of Gul. The sage's histories relate that the Ch'thar discovered a long-abandoned temple dedicated to Gul in the valley. It is left to the DM's discretion how much, if any, of Gul's history to reveal before the PCs arrive at the valley. Use the same chances for obtaining this information from *legend lore* or *contact other planes* spells.

The Shield of Anachrin Anias

Fragments of two short sentences appear on the rubbing of the back of Anachrin's shield. Since they are written in an ancient dialect of the gray elven language, they can be read only by someone who is fluent in elven and ancient languages, or who has the ability to *comprehend languages*. The first fragment reads: "Feed the heart of the mountain." The second fragment reads: "Adorn the hand of the king."

The rubbing of the back of Anachrin's shield includes a symbolic map consisting mainly of important landmarks. The Silver Lake is clearly indicated, along with several unique rock formations on the tops of hills, cliffs, and mountains. With a little bit of luck, a sharp wit, and (of course) the map itself, the party will have no problem finding the valley of the Ch'thar. Copy and distribute the player's map, taken from a detail of the shield, which clearly shows the mountain pass, the Traveling River, rain forests (which no longer exist), an ancient temple, the abandoned village of the Ch'thar, and a huge mountain at the south of the valley.

Getting to the valley requires a long journey, as it lies many miles to the north of Beryl. The journey requires three weeks of travel over treacherous terrain, including rocky, snow-covered mountains and a medium-sized glacier. If the party has flying mounts or a flying carpet at its disposal, the trip will take only three (albeit long) days of travel. The DM is encouraged to think up wandering encounters for the long trip. The *Wilderness Survival Guide*, the tables at the end of the *Monstrous Compendium*, and the 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide* all give guidelines for simulating the trials and encounters of such a journey.

The Valley of the Ch'Thar

There are no wandering monster encounters in the valley, except for the occasional herd of giant sheep (see area B for a complete description). Because of the proximity of a dragon lair (see area I9), the stone giants (area D) do not wander about.

A. Narrow Valley. This narrow valley, less than a mile wide and four miles long, is the only entrance to the valley

of the Ch'thar on foot or by horse. The mountain pass is barren and strewn with large rocks that have tumbled down the steep slopes. Many boulders are over 10′ high and restrict the vision of even mounted PCs to several hundred yards. Curiously, the temperature here is considerably warmer than the rest of the frozen mountain range.

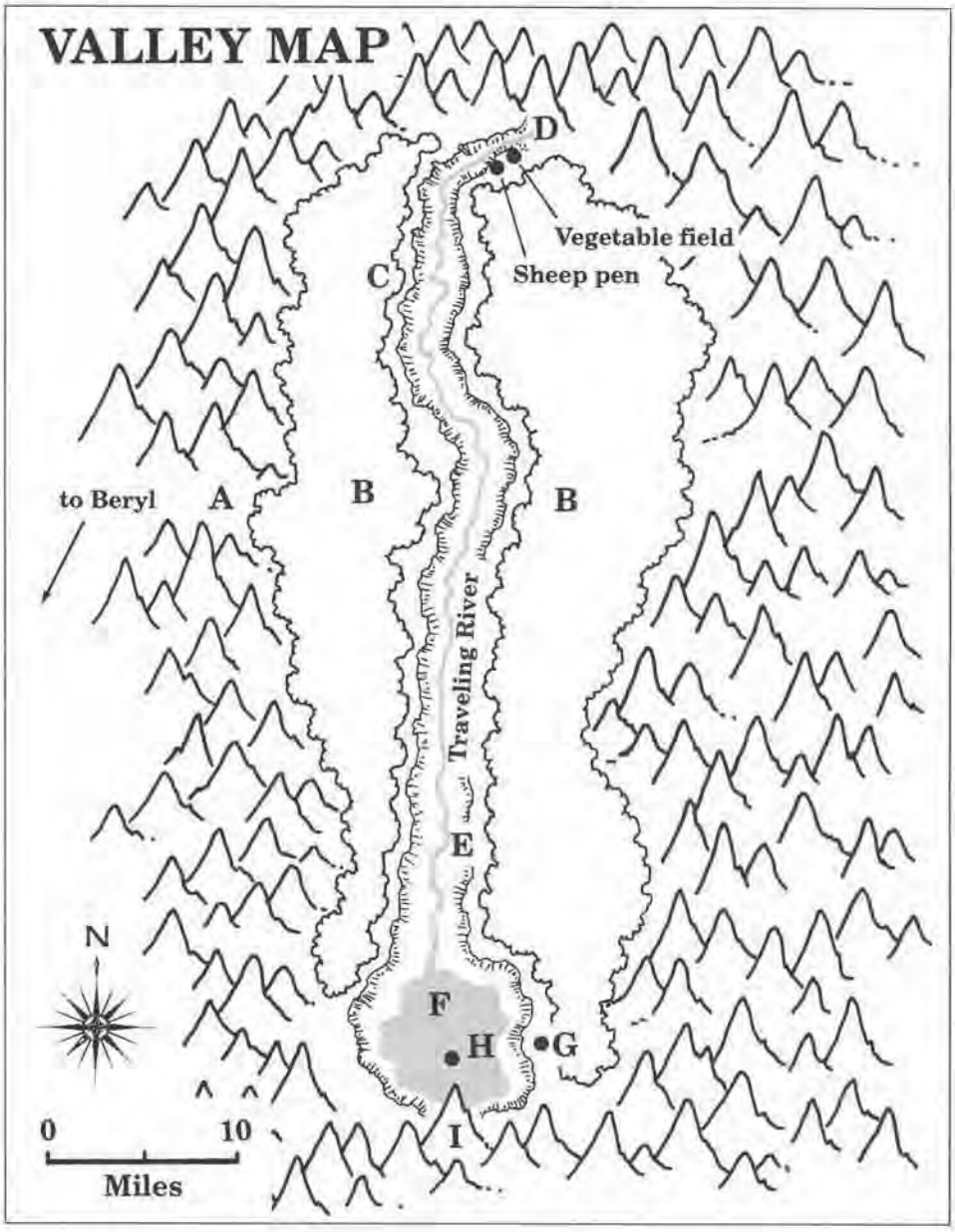
B. Valley of the Ch'Thar.

> The valley stretches from north to south and has a strangely mild climate (the temperature averages 60°F). Flanked by impossibly high and steep cliffs, the valley is carpeted in tough grasses and short scrubs. A faint mist, caused by the warm humid air in the valley, restricts your vision to about five miles. You can see the beginnings of a large ravine a mile or two ahead. A large herd of brown animals grazes a mile away.

If any rangers or trackers inspect the area where the mountain pass opens onto the valley, they discovers the traces of a team of horses that headed south roughly a week ago. Rangers or trackers can also notice the tracks of many large sheep. Roughly a thousand years ago, a small flock of 250 sheep wandered into the valley during an unusually mild winter in the highlands. Without their usual predators (the men, bears, pumas, etc. were all frightened away by the black dragon Sharakan, area I9), the sheep thrived in their new warm and damp environment.

The fertile soil and the mild climate supported a thick carpet of grasses to blanket the valley and feed the sheep. Normally, a limited food supply would be enough to curb the sheep population, but the fertility of the soil keeps the vegetation growing faster than the sheep can eat. Sharakan occasionally eats four or five of them, which keeps their numbers from exploding (the sheep are too stupid to flee from the proximity of the dragon lair), but their population has grown anyway, attracting the stone giants into the valley about 800 years ago (see area D).

These sheep are distinguished by their unusual size (each is about as big as a large cow), their fluffy brown fleece (Sharakan has eaten all the brightly colored ones), and their utter stupidity (Sharakan long ago ate any that seemed inclined to flee when he approached).

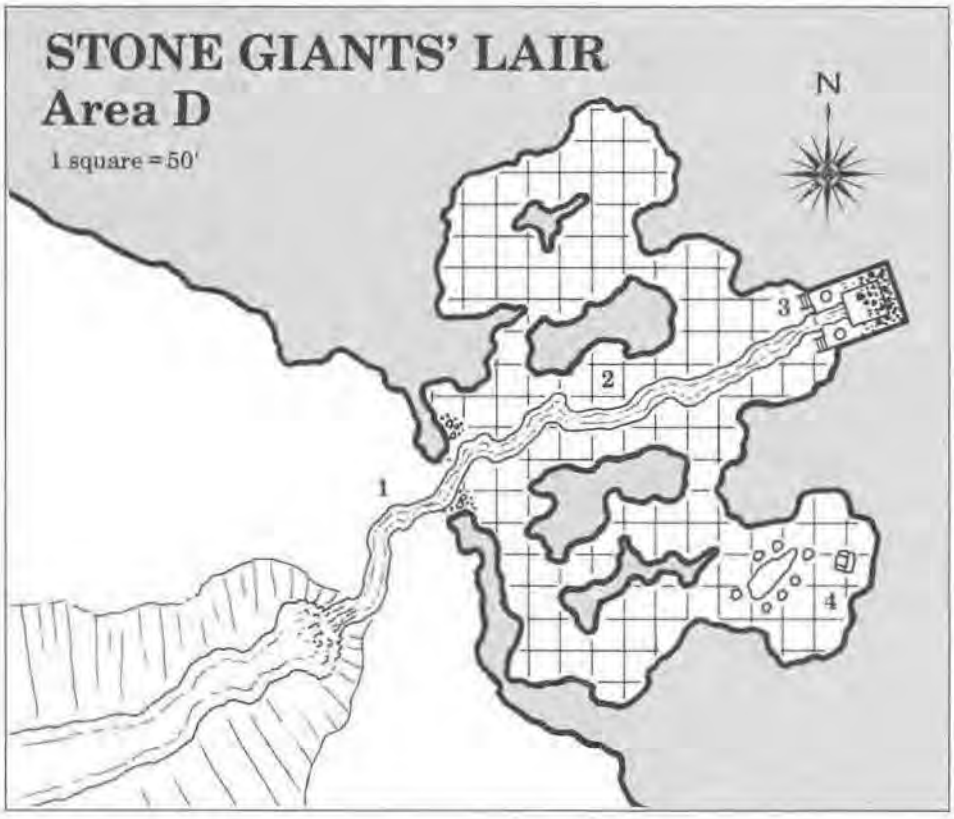


The sheep are docile and will allow themselves to be nudged, led in a certain direction, or even ridden. If an inventive PC has the bright idea of fitting a few with saddlebags, the sheep can carry 275 lbs. at their normal movement rate. Carrying 400 lbs. of gear slows the sheep's movement rate by 25%; when carrying 550 lbs. of gear, they move at half speed.

In battle, the sheep never attack but stand calmly so long as they are not injured. Once they have sustained some damage, however, the sheep become agitated and will most likely (75%) bolt off in a random direction, even if this means off a cliff to a certain death.

Giant sheep: Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3; hp 16-25; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SZ L; ML 6; XP nil; MC (Animal, Herd).

C. The Ravine. Over the millennia, what must have once been a powerful river has slowly eroded its bed down to limestone bedrock. Now all that remains is a 20′-wide stream and a deep ravine snaking though the valley. The stream flows down the ravine (with walls nearly 200′ high in some places)



from its source (area D) in the north to the great basin (area F) at the foot of King's Mountain.

If the PCs decide to climb down into the ravine, they will notice that the air seems a little warmer than in the valley above. While this may seem strange at first, since warm air rises, the phenomenon is due to convection currents carrying warm air from the hot lake to the south. The mist is definitely thicker in the ravine (especially near the warm flowing water), obscuring vision to a few hundred yards. Because of this mist cover, the stone giants who live in area D use the ravine as their primary means of traveling about the valley when in search of new sheep to add to their flock. A ranger or tracker has a 1-in-6 chance of noticing a giant's tracks along with the tracks of a few sheep in the ravine.

D. The Source. When the Traveling River was young and strong, it eroded a system of limestone caverns in the cliffs at its source. The caverns are now the home of the Red Rock Clan of stone giants, who moved into the valley 800 years ago. The clan subsists mainly off the sheep that thrive in the valley. In the ravine by the stream, the giants have built a stone corral in which they house about 30 of the brown fluffy animals. Also near the river in the ravine, the giants have cultivated a garden. Except near the entrance, the caverns have no illumination since the giants become acclimated to the dark very quickly (less than six seconds).

Note: The giants are neither evil nor completely hostile to the PCs. If they are simply attacked and slain out of hand, reduce the experience awarded for slaying the giants by half or more. Dealing with the giants successfully should gain experience points for a story goal—perhaps one-quarter of their total XP value.

D1. Cave Entrance. A young stone giant stands guard at the cave entrance, whiling away the hours by chucking boulders into the ravine.

Holt (stone giant): INT average; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 12+1; hp 69; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (stone club 2-12+7); SA hurl rocks for 2-16; SZ H; ML 14; XP 3,000; MC. Holt is sly, contemplative, and artistic, even for a stone giant. He carries 173 gp, 264 sp, two large throwing rocks, a giant-sized set of flint and steel, and a large stone flute, all in a haversack that he carries over his shoulder.

Holt has made a large pile of 51 large rocks, which he will gladly throw at any intruders that approach within 300 yards of the cave entrance. If the PCs attack, Holt calls for help and begins throwing boulders. Emerging two rounds later, the clan chief (currently in area D4) and the clan elder (currently in area D2) will attempt to drive off or slay the PCs. Should the PCs attempt to parley (while the boulders are landing about them), Holt will stop throwing rocks after one round. For a small bribe (200 gp per giant will suffice, though more is always appreciated), the young giant will escort the party to an audience with Chun, the clan chief.

D2. Cathedral Cavern. The walls of this large, cathedral-like cave are glistening with moisture from the Traveling River. Hurd, the clan elder, has decorated the walls with rough sculptures, formed using his *stone shape* ability. He is currently working on a clay model of his most recent artistic creation, "Dawn Over the Mountain."

As the oldest and wisest member of the clan (over 650 years old), Hurd commands wide respect among stone giants in these mountains. In a large belt pouch Hurd carries 464 gp, 102 pp, and a large rock for throwing. Hurd also wears a large, rough-cut ruby on a gold chain (worth 4,000 gp total) around his neck. The necklace is the clan totem and symbolizes Hurd's rank as Elder. In his old age, Hurd prefers talking to fighting, but if the safety of the clan is at stake, Hurd will shoulder his stone club and fight alongside his son, Chun, and grandson Holt.

Hurd (stone giant clan elder): INT average; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 14+2; hp 85; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (stone club 2-12+8); SA hurl rocks for 3-30 hp damage; SD can cast *stone shape, stone tell,* and *transmute rock to mud* at the 5th level of ability; SZ H; ML 16; XP 9,000; MC.

D3. Ancient Temple and Source.

In the east end of the cathedral-like cavern, you can see the source of the river in the remains of a large tem-

ple, partially buried in rubble. The temple is 100′ wide with two huge carved stone pillars extending upward 50′ into the vaulted ceiling. Each towers over giant-sized steps that climb from the floor of the cavern to a dais 30′ high. The river spews from a round hole roughly 15′ in diameter in the front of the dais, and a large net hangs in the geyser, attached by sturdy wool cord to the two pillars that flank the stream. The ceiling in the rear of the temple appears to have collapsed long ago.

The giants have noticed that, on rare occasions, humans have been known to flow out of the source (*teleported* along with the river from inside King's Mountain, area 13). When Hurd was chieftain 400 years ago, he made the net to catch any people or objects that arrive in the cavern along with the river. He even attached a bell to one of the cords holding the net, so that it would ring loudly when something was caught. In the past, the giants have been able to negotiate ransoms for some of the adventurers they captured. Five days ago, the giants discovered a bard in their net and have been holding him prisoner ever since (see area D4).

Long ago, an earthquake collapsed the rear of the temple and obliterated a mural that described the creation of the Stone as a prison for Gul. The two pillars that are not buried in ancient rubble offer warnings for mortals (in archaic Giantish) to beware the evil and terrible demigod Gul, but do not describe who or what Gul is.

Elder Hurd has conversed with the rocks in this temple using his *stone tell* ability and discovered the reason for the temple's creation. In order not to frighten the other members of his clan, Hurd has never communicated this secret to anyone, and he will certainly never tell an adventurer. When asked about the history of Gul, Hurd says that he was an ancient evil deity of the giant people, who committed a terrible crime against all giants and for that was cast out of the sky and punished terribly. Of course, if a PC has the ability to cast *stone tell*, he could learn the truth about the relic and the temple.

D4. Cave of the Chief. The cavern is dominated by a huge slab of slate propped on four boulders to serve as the clan dining table. A great stone chair and smaller stone stools circle the table. There are three sleeping areas covered with thick wool blankets. One sleeping area (the largest) can accommodate Chun, his wife, and their daughter. The other two sleeping areas are for the young warrior, Holt, and the clan elder, Hurd. The walls of the cavern are decorated like areas D2 and D3 with carvings and sculptures depicting the clan's arrivals, hardships, and trials since the giants arrived in the valley. The eastern wall of the cavern serves as the cooking and food storage area for the clan.

Currently, the remainder of the Red Rock clan is finishing a large meal while listening to a final concert by the famous (and somewhat notorious) bard, Francis Nightchaser. Francis was fished from the net in area D3 after he fell into the Traveling River within King's Mountain.

Francis Nightchaser (half-elf bard): AL NG; AC 2; MV 12; B11; hp 32 (67); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 17, C 15, I 15, W 13, Ch 17; CW 85%, DN 50%, PP 40%, RL 80%; ML 12; Spells: *feather fall, friends, phantasmal force, alter self, knock, mirror image, hold person, suggestion, water breathing, fire charm.*

Francis wears *elven chain mail* concealed under his traveling clothes, and carries a *wand of wonder* (with 23 charges left) concealed in his left boot. The command phrase, written in Common on the wand, is "Pish-Karish!" (the phrase must be yelled at the top of the lungs for the wand to function).

Francis has a well-traveled lute and a medium-sized backpack that he always keeps near him. It holds some adventuring gear (medicine, bandages, flint and steel, iron rations, a 50′ rope, wood wedges, three small sacks, etc.), a scroll of *protection from magic*, and a thick traveling spell book in a water- and fireproof case. The tome includes those spells Francis has memorized plus *read magic, detect magic,* and *rope trick.*

When the giants first captured the bard in their net five days ago, they disarmed him and tried to take away his backpack. Half dead and desperate, Francis *suggested* that Chun let him keep the backpack, since it had no treasure and included medicine he needed to survive. The magic worked, but even though Francis has partially healed, he has not yet attempted to escape, since Chun has hidden his favorite sword. The bard suspects that his magical blade is underneath the large boulder in the north alcove of the room and will not leave the stone giant lair without it. Luckily, Chun agreed this morning to return the blade if Francis would give them a concert worthy of recording in the clan history (the cavern walls). Francis has been enthusiastically singing, telling stories, and reciting poetry ever since that announcement.

Well studied in the history and culture of elves and giants, Francis has called upon his impressive repertoire of giant lore, flooding them with ancient sagas, ballads, and epics. Now five hours later, Francis is exhausted but content, since the chief grunted his approval and promised the return of his sword in the morning.

Chun (stone giant clan chief): INT average; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 14 + 3; hp 91; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (Earthshaker (see below) for 4d10 + 10 hp damage); SA hurl rocks for 3-30 hp damage; SZ H; ML 16; XP 9,000; MC.

In a haversack, Chun keeps 233 pp, 432 gp, 621 sp, two aquamarines (worth 500 gp each), and five rocks for throwing. Chun wields Earthshaker, a *maul of the titans*, the symbol of his role as chief of the clan. This massive stone-handled mallet has been handed down from chief to chief since the founding of the clan.

Chun is not too bright, but he gladly listens to the advice of his father, Hurd, and his wife, Yla. A giant of few words and even fewer emotions, Chun is not easily moved. Once he is angered, however, his rage is impossible to cool. His mind set has the inertia of a glacier and can be redirected by only an exceptionally quick wit.

If the PCs are escorted into the lair by his son (from area D1), the chief asks the PCs their business in the valley. If the PCs reveal that they are searching for the lost elven nation, the chief says: "Follow the river to the ruins. Now go away." If the PCs do not follow this advice, the chief grows angry and attacks with his father and son. The giants will not pursue if the party flees but will post an alert watch.

In addition to the chief and the bard, there are also an adult female stone giant, a stone giant infant, and a cave bear sitting at or near the table. Babka, Chun's pet cave bear, has curled himself into a large ball under the table, nap-

ping after eating a large portion of giant sheep. The bear will wake up only if the PCs attack, in which case it will growl menacingly and join combat at the side of his master.

Cave bear: INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 6+6; hp 41; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-12; SA hug; SZ H; ML 10; XP 650; MC).

Sitting to the right of her husband, Yla appears unusually overweight, even for a stone giant (she's pregnant again). Yla is practical, level headed, and assumes the worst from humans unless they prove otherwise. Unless clearly threatened, she will not enter into combat, but will gather her daughter and hide in the rear of the cavern away from the fighting. If anyone threatens her child, she grabs one of five stone clubs leaning nearby and attacks ferociously. Yla is a daughter of the chief of the Granite clan, which through this marriage is now closely allied to the Red Rock clan. If Yla escapes a hostile encounter and returns to her people, the party will be stalked by several angry stone hill giant relatives.

Yla (female stone giant): INT average; AL N; AC 0; MV 12; HD 14+1; hp 67; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (stone club, 2-12+8); SZ H; ML 16; XP 8,000; MC.

Yla carries 113 gp, 531 sp, and a spare bib for her daughter in a shoulder sack. She wears a human's topaz-studded silver bracelet (worth 560 gp) as a ring. Yla's infant daughter, Lit, is currently sleeping in the chief's vast bed. Although the child is old enough to toddle about the cavern, she is about as helpless (and danger prone) as most human two-year-olds.

If the PCs start a battle in this cavern, Francis urges Yla to remain uninvolved (like himself). Chun and his clan are not a vicious bunch, just a family trying to survive. Francis recognizes this and will oppose any belligerent PCs that appear intent upon needlessly exterminating the giants. If the battle appears to be going badly for both sides, the bard will be the first to sue for peace, using his wand to gain the attention of both the PCs and the giants. The bard will not join the party under any conditions, preferring to stay with the giants for another day or so to learn some of their tribal stories (he hasn't heard about the legend and relic of Gul yet).

Francis will remain tight lipped about the dangers in King's Mountain, telling the PCs that knowing what they are about to face will hinder them, not help them. If specifically asked about the existence of a dragon, Francis becomes pale and says that, if the PCs ever find a huge white mushroom, they should flee past it as if their lives were at stake. Francis will not offer even this cryptic advice if the PCs are rude or have provoked an attack with the giants. More than this Francis will not reveal about the mountain, even under magical coercion.

Chun keeps the clan treasure underneath a huge boulder that only he can shove aside. Moving the great stone requires a combined strength of 45 from up to six man-sized characters. In a shallow pit are 2,187 gp, 9,652 sp, and Francis's long sword, Snakebiter (a *sword +1, +4 vs. reptiles)* in a loose jumble. Francis will insist upon the sword's return if it is recovered.

E. The Reptile Remains. A recent landslide here has exposed a 50' band of sediment in the wall of the ravine. The landslide also carried down the skeletons of three giant reptiles, gigantic ground-roving beasts over 200' long. Protruding from the side of the ravine, 150' below the valley floor above, are the skeletons of several hundred of the reptiles. A druid can tell that this valley was once a great swamp or rain forest that suddenly dried up ages ago.

When Thiondar gained possession of the Stone of Gul millennia ago, some of the power of the relic was diverted from heating the valley. The rain forest—the base for the reptiles' food chain—could not survive in the cooler climate, and any great lizards that remained died of starvation within a generation.

This site has enormous significance from a paleontological point of view, and PCs who report the existence and location of these remains to the College of Antiquity will each receive a 2,500 gp and 2,500 XP bonus upon their return.

F. The Great Basin. The Traveling River forms a large lake of warm water at the base of King's Mountain. Magically heated by the Stone of Gul and over 100' deep at the center, the lake has become tainted with extremely dilute carbonic acid. The lake basin rests on a natural deposit of calcium carbonate, so the water of the lake is

both too acidic and warm to support the normal sort of aquatic life. Still, a number of hardy plankton and small mutant fish have managed to survive in this inhospitable environment. One particular form of alga has managed to thrive in the warm water and covers the lake like a blanket to a depth of 10'-15'. The water tastes slightly sour and a bit bubbly but it is otherwise potable.

G. The Ruins. When the band of adventurers led by Dirk Derlith arrived in the valley nine days ago, they established camp in the ruins of a long-abandoned village on a cliff overlooking the lake. Dirk and his party left behind three henchmen to guard their horses and to stay out of trouble (good help is hard to find). The henchmen include:

Sophina Darlana: AL LG; AC 4; MV 9; C5; hp 38; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 11, D 15, C 13, I 13, W 16 Ch 14; ML 14; chain mail, footman's mace; Spells: *command, cure light wounds* (×2), *detect evil, protection from evil, aid, augury, heat metal, hold person, silence 15' radius, prayer.* In her backpack she carries a potion of *levitation* and a scroll with *cure critical wounds* (×3) and *raise dead,* cast at the 12th level, for use in emergencies.

Kind, attractive, and aggressive, Sophina is a follower of Ellana, Beryl's high priestess of Athena. She usually speaks for the other two henchmen present, whom she considers nice enough in spite of their less than noble upbringing.

Both Aldrek Sureshield and Richard Thrush are Dirk Derlith's henchmen. Aldrek has a way with animals (especially horses) but not with people; he was brought along mostly for his abilities to cook and tend to the mounts. Dour and pessimistic, the dwarf is not much of a conversationalist. Richard, Dirk's other henchman, was brought for his wilderness and tracking skills. The ranger is gruff but gladly lends Aldrek a hand with camp chores (which Sophina leaves to them both). Although they consider the priestess somewhat haughty and often condescending, they generally abide by her wishes and follow her commands.

Aldrek Sureshield (dwarf): AL CN; AC 2; MV 6; F4; hp 41; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 17, D 12, C 18, I 11, W 12, Ch 8; ML 14; plate mail, shield, battle axe.

Richard Thrush: AL NG; AC 2; MV 9; R3; hp 27; THAC0 18 (16 with long bow); #AT 1 (2 with long bow); Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 17, C 15, I 15, W 14, Ch 17; ML 14; chain mail, long sword, long bow.

As for the ruins themselves, the only surviving building is a large meeting hall. The peaked roof of the structure, somehow fashioned out of solid rock over 15' thick, protrudes from the ground to form a prism-shaped enclosure 150' long, 60' wide, and 50' high. The structure is stable, and nothing short of an earthquake will induce it to settle or collapse. Inside the enclosure, the followers have stored their provisions, equipment, and eight light war horses.

After Dirk arrived, he spent two days excavating the area with *dig* spells. He uncovered the foundations of houses, the vestiges of a paved road, and a stone pillar buried in front of the hall (its top 2" had been showing before he arrived; the level of the ruins is 12' below the current ground level). The pillar was once an ancient means of recording tribal history, but the writings have long since eroded away in the corrosive environment near the lake.

This site (along with area E) is an incredibly rich area archaeologically. Interested characters who root around in the dirt near the foundations of the elven homes will find strange objects, trinkets, pottery shards, mithril arrowheads, and other odds and ends left behind when the Ch'thar departed for their new home inside the mountain (see area I29). PCs who report the existence of this site to the College of Antiquity will each receive a 2,500 gp and 2,500 XP bonus.

When the PCs approach the ruins, they are challenged by Aldrek and Richard, who are attempting to hide in the shade of the prism-shaped hall. If the PCs announce that they have come from the College of Antiquity (or make up a good story about how the Derlith expedition was long overdue and Leopold had begun to worry), the three followers heave a noticeable sigh of relief and reveal that they, too, were sent by the College of Antiquity. They are extremely anxious about the fate of their master and mistress beneath the mountain. Dirk and his party departed the ruins six days ago and have not been seen or heard from since.

Sophina attempts to monopolize all of the conversation with the PCs after Aldrek's and Richard's initial challenge, urging the PCs to investigate and save her mistress Ellana. She will gladly indicate the entrance to the mountain that Dirk's party used (area I1) and will stay put with Sureshield and Thrush until (with Athena's blessing) everyone has returned safely. Aldrek, the eternal pessimist, has his doubts.

H. Sharakan's Secret Entrance. In this particularly murky region of the lake, Sharakan, the black dragon living in area I9, has induced a substantial amount of plant growth to obscure the secret entrance to his lair. The lair entrance is more than two miles away from the main entrance to King's Mountain (area I1). Since it is beneath 40' of water and completely overgrown with vegetation, the 20'-wide crevice has only a 1-in-6 chance of being noticed by a PC swimming nearby. The crevice becomes a wide tunnel, completely filled with water, that twists and turns for over 2,000 yards underground until it emerges in the bottom of the pool in area I10. Sharakan uses this exit during his rare hunting expeditions. With his increasing age, Sharakan has found that he needs less and less food to survive (now one sheep will last him several weeks). Nothing could please him more, since that gives him all the more time to stay home and count his coin collection.

J. King's Mountain. Unless otherwise stated, there is no illumination of any kind on the first and second levels of the mountain, nor are there any wandering monsters (the black dragon, the spiders, and the Traveling River itself see to that).

Much of the first level of the mountain has been partially flooded as the lake has settled and grown (due to precipitation) over the past thousand years. Since the water is roughly 15'-20' deep in the first caverns (areas 1-8), the PCs will undoubtedly need to procure some form of aquatic transportation.

The PCs can construct a raft for themselves in about eight hours (it takes time to find suitable logs, cut them down, strip them, and lash them tightly together). Should the party ask Sophina about how Dirk managed to enter the mountain, she says Dirk had a magical boat that he pulled out of his backpack.

Combat situations in a boat should be given special attention to add a touch of

realism. Boats and rafts are unsteady platforms, and those attempting to stand up and fight in them stand the chance of falling into deep water (a dexterity check in such cases is appropriate) or capsizing (if everyone in the craft fails a dexterity check). The movement and cargo capacities of several kinds of boats can be found in Table 76 on page 126 of the 2nd Edition *DMG*.

King's Mountain, Level One

1. The Arch.

> After searching for an entrance to the mountain, you have discovered a large stone arch at its base, where the mountain meets the lake. The arched entrance is only partially flooded with lake water. Although the thick layer of algae on top of the water prevents you from seeing the bottom, you can scrape the algae aside with a stick to see that the badly weathered arch-stones descend at least 15' until they are lost in the murky depths. The arch is devoid of markings and leaves 10' of clearance above the water's surface.

At the entrance, the water is roughly 20' deep. The arched entrance has more than enough headroom to admit any small water craft into the caverns under the mountain. This main entrance is more than two miles away from Sharakan's secret underwater entrance (area H) at the bottom of the lake. Characters swimming underwater have vision limited to 15'.

2. Hall of Entry. This huge chamber (50' wide and 150' long) is flooded to a depth of 16'. Eighteen massive stone columns support a barrel-vaulted ceiling that arches 30' above the water's surface. Any decorations on the walls have long-since eroded or been covered in algae. The water is practically stagnant in this chamber.

As the PCs proceed south, they can notice large patches of spider webs on the columns within 10' of the water level. Midway down the chamber, a black blast mark, made by one of Dirk's *fireballs*, has left its telltale signature on the algae of the roof. Within the webs near the southern exit lurk five giant spiders.

Giant spiders (5): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, web 12; HD 4+4; hp 30, 27, 25, 22, 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA deadly poison; SZ L; ML 13; XP 650; MC.

The arachnids have learned how to swim and are not afraid of the water. They will drop from the ceiling on their prey, and characters hit by the spiders must make a dexterity check on 1d20 or fall into the water. If a spider misses its target, it swims to the nearest column, climbs to the ceiling, and tries again (this procedure takes two rounds).

Underwater, on the floor of the chamber, the PCs have a 1-in-20 chance of finding one of the following items in the thick algae for every turn they search: a rusty arrowhead, a grimy dagger, a broken lantern, a flask containing a potion of *clairvoyance*.

The southern exit to this hall is low, only 5' higher than the surface of the water. Beyond this archway, the waterway becomes a narrow channel (15'-20' wide) with its ceiling 10' above the water. Although the flow is imperceptible, watercraft are dragged down the channel at a rate of 10' per round if the PCs do no work paddling, rowing, or poling.

3. Spider Lair. The underground channel splits into two branches. If the PCs choose the left branch, they discover that the walls and ceiling of the channel becoming increasingly covered with webs. Soon afterward, their craft will run aground in the (dry) spider lair. This cavern is completely covered with webs. Here and there, a skull or bone from a sheep protrudes from the webs blanketing the floor. Characters attempting to walk across the cave floor find themselves sinking to their ankles in the sticky stuff and are unable to pull themselves free (as per the effects of a *web* spell). Because the webs are so saturated with water, only a 10' square area can be burned at a time.

Hiding in the easternmost alcove of the cavern are three wounded **giant spiders** (hp 24 (29), 19 (24), 17 (23); other statistics as listed at area 2). The spiders were injured in a battle with Dirk's party last week and have been recovering here. They hide for as long as they are able to escape detection and hope the PCs leave, but if anyone wanders into the web and gets stuck, the spiders attack immediately. In the webs of the lair are the dried husks of many bats, the remains of one human (an unlucky member of Dirk's company), bits of armor, and an intact backpack. The pack contains some iron rations, a lantern, a flask of oil, and a pouch with three emeralds worth 100 gp, 250 gp, and 500 gp.

4. White Cavern.

> The channel opens up into a larger, twisting cavern with walls that are amorphous white draperies of stone, glistening with moisture. Twenty feet above you, small fingerlike stalactites gleam with a pinkish hue. The water appears to be flowing slightly faster, although now it is only about 20' per round.

There are no denizens of this cavern. Other than the beautiful scenery, there is nothing else of interest here.

5. Y-Shaped Cavern.

> The channel widens here and splits into two branches. One branch of the flow heads north, the other south. Along the east wall of the cavern is a small ledge, about 8' wide, 40' long, and 1' above the water level.

If the PCs stop their craft and inspect the ledge, they discover the remains of a small campfire that marks where Dirk and his band had lunch nine days ago, before their encounter with Sharakan. PCs interested in the direction of water flow out of the cavern will notice that much of the water appears to be flowing to the south, while the water in the northern branch barely moves at all.

6. Bat Chimney. This 100'-wide cavern extends upward over 700'. A small 1'×4' crevice in the ceiling filters a spike of light into the huge chimney. The cavern has become the roost for 285 bats. If the PCs shine light on the walls of the cavern, there is a 1-in-6 chance that the bats will be alarmed and fly about the cavern in a large cloud, obscuring infravision, dousing torches, and foiling the concentration needed to cast spells (spell-casters must roll a wisdom check to avoid having spells ruined by the distracting cloud of bats). PCs caught in a bat swarm are subject to 1-2 bat attacks per round.

The other inhabitants of this cavern welcome any intrusion by the PCs. Three cave fishers, dwelling on a 10'-wide shelf above the cavern entrance, have been living on a steady supply of

bats for quite some time and are always glad to supplement their diet.

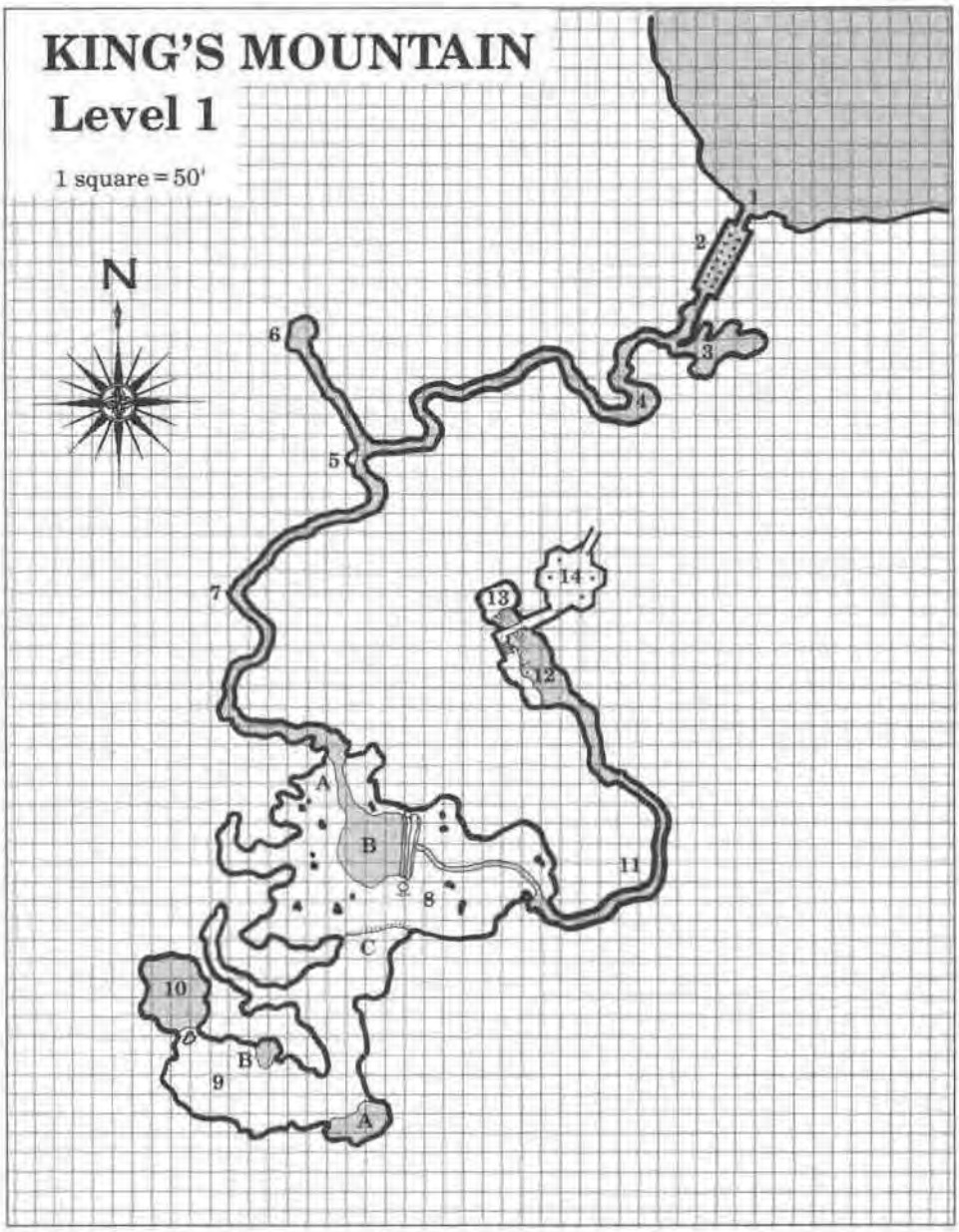
Bats (285): INT animal; AL N; AC 8 (4 when flying); MV 1, fly 24 (B); HD ¼; hp 1-2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SZ T; ML 3; XP 15; MC.

Cave fishers (3): INT semi; AL N; AC 4; MV 1; HD 3; hp 21, 17, 16; THAC0 17 or 15; #AT 2; Dmg: 2-8/2-8; SA adhesive trapline; SZ M; ML 11; XP 175; MC.

Once the fishers hear a party approaching, they reel in their adhesive filaments and hide on their shelf until they can gauge the PCs' strength. If the party consists of more than three characters, the fishers will attack only in the confusion created by a bat swarm. Even then, they will cast their filaments at the smallest members in the party (preferably gnomes, dwarves, or halflings) before they try to tackle humans. This group of cave fishers has survived this long because of its discretion, and if the party appears to large or strong, they simply hide and dine on bats, as usual.

There is no treasure in the area, other than a rusting bulls-eye lantern that one of Dirk's party dropped in the water three weeks ago when the bats began to cloud the cavern.

7. Fast Water. The water speed picks up considerably as the channel descends and twists unexpectedly, making precise mapmaking impossible. The flow rate is about 60′ per round in this stretch of the channel. Unless the PCs are careful, they will collide with the walls of the channel and possibly damage their craft. The DM should refer to pages 46-48 of the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, which describe the chances and consequences of collisions in an underground waterway. If this resource is unavailable to you, improvise the party's chances for damaging their boat or raft.



8. Cavern of Fungi.

Your craft sails into a vast cavern that is dominated by imposing stalagmites, stalactites, and natural columns spanning the 30′ distance from floor to ceiling. These stony teeth and pillars would seem less imposing if the entire cavern were not entirely overgrown with fungi, algae, molds, and mushrooms of all shapes, colors, and sizes. As your craft drifts farther into the chamber, the overpowering stench of decomposing vegetable matter wafts over you. The air inside the cavern is warm and extremely humid. Suddenly, a chorus of loud screaming and shrieking, coming from a grove of tall fungi, splits the silence.

Normally, the swift current will carry the PCs past the shrieker grove (area 8A) to the dammed reservoir (area 8B) in one to two rounds.

8A. Shrieker Grove. Just inside the entrance to this huge cavern, a small colony of shriekers has been planted near the shore by the black dragon Sharakan (see area 9). Only 5′ from the shore of the river, the six shriekers scream vociferously when the PCs enter, bringing Sharakan to investigate in five rounds. If the party somehow prevents the shriekers from screaming for very long (a bard sings to them, a *silence* spell is cast, etc.), the dragon decides that the shrieking was probably a false alarm, but being prudent will come to investigate in 10 rounds anyway.

Shriekers (6): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 21, 19, 17, 16, 14, 12; THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SD noise; SZ M; ML 12; XP 120; MC (Fungus).

Two growths of violet fungi have taken up residence in the shrieker grove. They attack any PCs who wade into the grove to battle the shriekers. The fungi have no treasure, since it is collected by Sharakan every 100 years or so.

Violet fungi (2): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 3; hp 18, 16; THAC0 17; #AT 4; Dmg 1-4; SA rot flesh; SZ M; ML 12; XP 175; MC (Fungus).

8B. The Mushroom Ploy. Once the PCs arrive at the large pool, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The water flows into a large stagnant pool, perhaps 150' at its widest and covered with thick brown algae. The scummy pond smells of rotting bell peppers; it doesn't take a druid or a ranger to tell that this water is not drinkable.
>
> The eastern shore of the lake is formed by a massive dam, 15' wide and 80' long. The stalactites within a 30' radius of the dam appear to have been snapped off by an angry child, who stacked them like toys to make his dam. Beyond the dam, the river (much shallower than before) continues east out of sight. A huge pale mushroom squats at south end of the dam, like a fat man straddling a log. This fungus is over 10' high and 8' wide. Clearly, in order to proceed downriver, you are going to have to portage around the dam and the mushroom.

By the time the PCs have absorbed all the details of this cavern, the black dragon Sharakan should have arrived on the scene (his statistics appear at area 9). Using his *ring of invisibility and inaudibility* to remain unseen and unheard, the dragon approaches the PCs until he can see them (this is about 120' in complete darkness). He then casts *detect magic, ventriloquism,* and *phantasmal force* in quick succession. (Note that, under AD&D 2nd Edition rules, a dragon does not cast spells like a wizard but only needs to concentrate for a moment and the spell is cast. Because Sharakan is a dragon, his ring does not interfere with his spell casting. However, if Sharakan were to cast an attack spell, the *invisibility/inaudibility* would be broken.)

Sharakan dammed the river long ago to prevent anyone from drifting through his domain without paying a toll. Characters specialized in boating can portage a small craft around the obstacle in 2-5 rounds. Otherwise, it will take 1d4+10 rounds to unload the PCs' water craft, transport it around the dam, and reload it. In this time, Sharakan will undoubtedly have begun his ploy.

> The giant white mushroom begins to glow with a faint green light. Sounding like an angry old man, it announces: "I am the Mushroom King, and you have woken me from my long sleep! You must pay my toll to pass through my kingdom."

Sharakan is using his *ventriloquism* and *phantasmal force* spells to extract additional treasure for his hoard from the PCs. He demands (through the voice of the "Mushroom King") 1,000 gold coins per PC. If the PCs are not carrying that much cash, he asks for some of the party's magical items, referring to them as "toys." Since he has already cast a *detect magic* spell, he can refer to the PCs' magical items specifically, requesting one per party member as his toll. If the PCs complain but agree to give up one or two permanent magical items, or three or four potions or scrolls, the "Mushroom King" reluctantly agrees ("Well, they had better be good!"). Using his *medallion of ESP* (see area 9), he can determine if the PCs are lying about the items they give him. He will not accept *cursed* items. Once the party has handed over its toll, the dragon allows the PCs to depart the cavern peacefully. Sharakan, in his old age, much prefers gaining his treasure through trickery than by brute force (it makes him feel sneaky).

If the party becomes violent and attacks the mushroom, the DM should play the "battle" like a regular melee. The mushroom (quite normal despite its unusual size, which is due to Sharakan's *plant growth* ability) has an armor class of 9 and can take 10 hp damage. Once the mushroom is destroyed, read the following to the players:

> The darkness shivers slightly and twists into the enormous shape of an ancient black dragon. Its mouth opens, revealing teeth the size of swords, and the great wyrm hisses: "You have no idea how long it took me to grow that mushroom! You will give me four of your magic toys or die at once!"

Sharakan is gigantic, roughly 190' from tip to tail. His *fear* aura affects everyone within a 150' radius, with a −4 penalty to affected beings' saving throws. Because of the cramped quarters, however, the dragon's combat ability is hampered. He cannot easily turn around, nor can he attack with his wings.

If the PCs run downstream, jump into the 5' deep water, and swim for it, the dragon will use his breath weapon once (trying to get one or two slow-moving PCs in the acid stream) and then let them go. If the PCs give Sharakan what he wants, the dragon will let them leave in peace. He does not worry about the PCs returning to attack him. No one leaving the cavern via the eastern exit has ever returned to bother him.

If the PCs prepare to attack the dragon, Sharakan invokes *darkness* in a 120' radius. Hampered by the stalagmites and stalactites, Sharakan's claw and bite attacks are at −2 to hit, and his tail attack (at PCs fleeing downriver) is at −4 to hit. Because of all the cover, the PCs save vs. Sharakan's breath weapon at +2. Once Sharakan has sustained 50 hp damage, he casts another *darkness* spell to cover his escape and retires to his lair (area 9), where he can use all of his attacks without penalty. His lair, while smaller than the cavern of fungi, is free of the restricting stalagmites and stalactites that prevent the dragon from using his physical attacks to full advantage.

Once swords have been drawn, the PCs will have to do some fast talking if they want to avoid being eaten by Sharakan. Like all dragons, Sharakan has an ego larger than the mountain. If he really wanted to, he could blow away the entire party. Instead, Sharakan wants some fun, some excitement, some entertainment. Counting coins can get pretty monotonous after several hundred years. A bard with a rousing song, for instance, would undoubtedly please the dragon. A flashy but insubstantial magical item like a *wand of illumination* or a potion of *rainbow hues* might tickle his fancy and convince him not to eat the party after all. This encounter is not meant to destroy the party,

although that will certainly happen if the PCs insist on fighting an intractable foe. Rather, this is supposed to get the PCs in the thinking mood for the rest of the adventure.

If the PCs somehow manage to drive off the dragon, they notice that Sharakan escaped to the south. The fungi and algae in the cavern are inedible, but 2-8 of the mushroom heads are large enough to support one person each floating down the river. There is no treasure in the fungus cavern.

8C. Concealed Shelf. Sharakan has used his *plant growth* ability to create a curtain of foliage covering this huge shelf in the south of the cavern. The ledge is 8′ higher than the floor of the cavern, and it will take nonrogue PCs one round to climb up there.

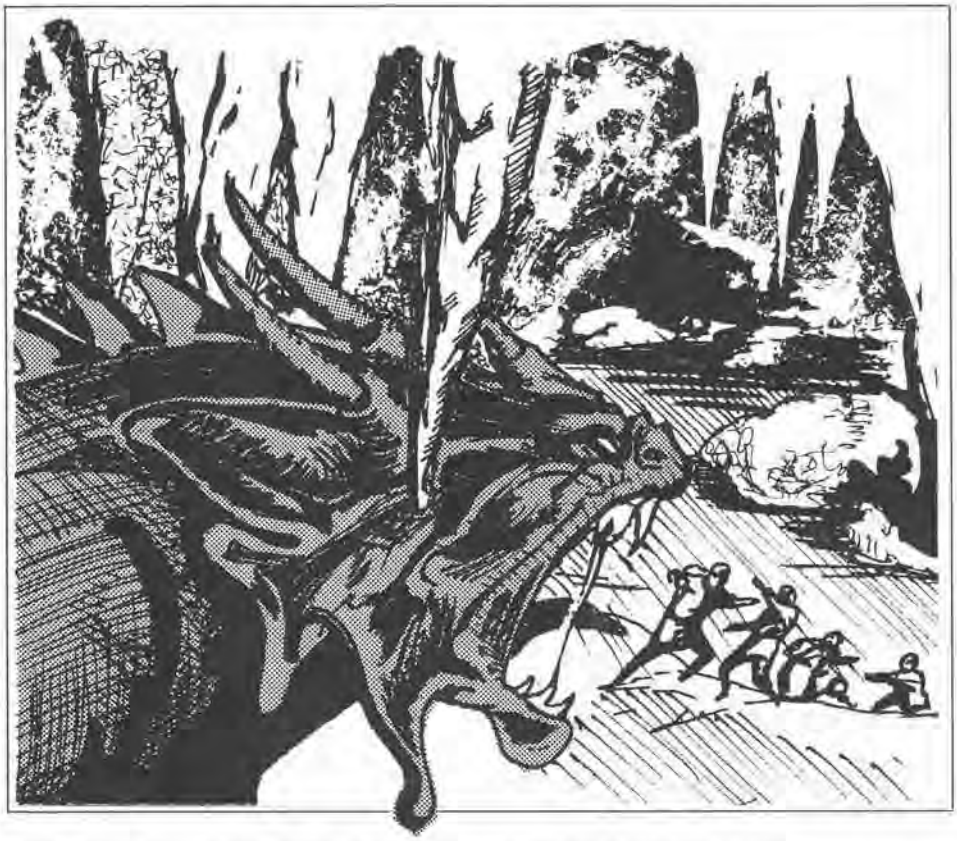
9. The Lair. Sharakan's parents claimed this lair over 2,000 years ago, and Sharakan has lived here for all of his 1,400 years. At his age, the dragon is as crafty and cautious as he is powerful. PCs should be warned to mess with the dragon at their own peril; he has decimated many parties of adventurers seeking the mysteries hidden under the mountain.

The dragon will either be dozing or counting his coins when the PCs enter area 8. His slumber is light (you don't get to be a great wyrm by being a heavy sleeper), and his sense of hearing is so acute that the sound of the shriekers screaming in area 8A will waken him immediately. See the description of area 8 for his tactics while in that chamber.

One of Sharakan's favorite games during a boring year is to mix up all of his coins, separate them into individual piles, and count them to see if he has lost any (he knows their exact number by heart). Next comes the fun part. If he comes up short (he usually does; there are so many plants, tiny crevices, and small ponds in the cavern that it is practically inevitable), Sharakan flies into a rampage and soars off into the mountains looking for rich prey.

The dragon had just embarked on his usual coin-mixing game when he became distracted by Dirk Derlith's party of adventurers. Dirk managed to protect most of his party from the dragon with a *wall of force* while they escaped in his portable magical boat.

Fortunately for the dragon, the wizard's *wall of force* cut off one of the



party members, sealing her in area 8 with Sharakan. The attractive woman, as it turned out, was a barbarian named Khirsa. She was not at all inclined to causal conversation (so few human barbarians actually are) and attacked Sharakan at once. It was the most challenging battle he had enjoyed in years, but it ended, to his dismay, much too soon for his liking. He always forgets his own strength when he gets excited.

If Sharakan is forced to retreat from a battle in area 8, and (using his *clairaudience* ability) he knows that the PCs are following him to his lair, he will imbibe a potion of *extra healing*, surround himself with another *darkness* spell (it doesn't hamper his ability to sense and attack the PCs one bit), and prepare to blast the PCs with his breath weapon the moment they round the corner. The PCs need to check for surprise because of the suddenness of his attack. Because of his incredible senses, Sharakan is surprised in his lair only on a 1 on 1d20. With a 60′ ceiling, this cavern is more than large enough for the dragon to move about freely and use all his physical attack forms with no penalties.

Sharakan, black dragon (great wyrm): INT average; AL CE; AC −7; MV 12, fly 30 (C), swim 12; HD 20; hp 148; THAC0 −3; #AT 3 plus special; Dmg 1d6+12/1d6+12/3d6+12; SA spells (all spells and spell-like effects at 17th level), breath weapon (60′ line of acid, 5′ wide, for 4d4+12 hp), +12 to hit/damage combat modifier, two wing buffet attacks (1d6+12 hp each, plus dexterity check on 1d20 or be knocked prone), rear kick (1d6+12 hp, plus dexterity check on 1d20 or be knocked back 13′-18′; if knocked back, save vs. petrification at −12 or fall) or tail slap (affects up to 12 beings; 2d6+12 hp, plus save vs. petrification or be stunned for 2-5 rounds), snatch if airborne (can catch three size-L beings and drop them from great heights); SD magical items, low chance to surprise, *detect invisibility* (120′ radius), *clairaudience* in lair (240′ radius), immune to normal missiles, save as 18th-level fighter, *fear* aura (150′ radius, save at −4, effects last 4d6 rounds), *water breathing, darkness* (120′ radius, three times per day), *corrupt water* (120 cubic feet, once per day; magical potions save on 15+ on 1d20),

plant growth (once per day), *summon insects* (once per day), *charm reptiles* (three times per day); MR 45%; SZ G; ML 16; XP 31,000 (modified upward for all abilities); MC.

Sharakan can cast the following spells at the 17th level of ability, each once per day: *charm person, detect magic, magic missile, phantasmal force, shield, shocking grasp, sleep, spider climb, ventriloquism.*

Over the centuries, Sharakan has gained an affection for magical items, which he fondly refers to as his "toys." Sharakan always wears a *ring of invisibility and inaudibility* on a right-hand claw and a *ring of regeneration* on a left-hand claw. Around his neck, he wears a *medallion of ESP* with a 90' radius.

In his lair, Sharakan keeps some important magical items in an unlocked chest lined with lead (which blocks *detect magic* spells). Sharakan concealed the chest under some algae using his *plant growth* ability; it rests on a natural stone shelf in the lair, 15' higher than the cavern floor, and has a 1-in-10 chance of being noticed per turn of time spent searching the lair. Within the chest are:

—A *chime of opening* (with 23 charges remaining). Sharakan uses this to open the large locked chest (see below) when he wants to gaze lovingly at his most valuable piece of treasure. Since this urge strikes him only once every 150 years or so, the chime still has quite a few charges remaining.

—A *helm of brilliance* (with one diamond, one ruby, three fire opals, and 26 opals remaining). Once this was Sharakan's favorite toy, but now the dragon will now use this device only in the most dire emergencies. If cornered in his lair, down to 25% or fewer of his hit points and having cast most of his spells, the dragon will use the helm to hit the party with a *prismatic spray* (expending the diamond) and a *fireball* (expending a fire opal).

—A potion of *extra healing.* If Sharakan retreats from area 8, the dragon will imbibe this before the PCs arrive.

—An *elixir of youth.* Sharakan has been saving this to cheer himself up on a rainy day.

—A potion of *vitality.* The dragon keeps this here for want of a better place to put it.

Sharakan keeps his favorite treasure in a large (80 lbs.) chest with a masterful lock (−30% on a rogue's chances to pick it) in the center of his lair. The markings on the chest indicate that it was once the property of one Alex de Chandon. A bard will recognize that the name in the inscription belongs to a legendary knight who lived over 1,000 years ago. Unfortunately for Alex, he discovered the dragon lair under the mountain when it was still occupied by Sharakan's parents. The knight slew Sharakan's mother, whereupon the older male dragon tore Alex apart before expiring from his own wounds.

Because of its historical value and its fine carvings, the chest is worth roughly 6,000 gp. The equipment inside is of astonishing craftsmanship and beauty:

—A full suit of *red dragon scale armor +1,* fashioned from the hide of Nerileth the Destroyer, an adult red dragon that Alex himself slew in a fantastic battle still remembered by bards today. The breast plate, arm guards, leg guards, loin guard, and neck guard are all edged with gold, which lends a luxurious contrast to the deep, blood-red color of the dragon scales. The entire set must be worn to get full benefit from the suit of armor, which lends its wearer AC −5 and complete fire resistance. The armor is extremely well balanced and nonbulky, affording its wearer a normal movement rate and an encumbrance of only 15 lbs.

—A carved steel helmet with gold etching. This *helm +1* is inlaid with the full name and title of its previous owner: "Alex de Chandon, High Paladin to the Emperor of Raensia."

—A dagger with an ivory handle and sheath delicately carved with a forest scene. This blade, named Sinister, is of elven manufacture and made of excellent steel, even though it sports one or two small nicks. Although not magical, the weapon set is worth 1,500 gp.

—A bastard sword with an ivory handle and sheath carved with a court scene depicting a warrior paying homage to his lord. The sword is a magical *luck blade* named Warwinner. All of its *wishes* were expended long ago by Alex.

—A pair of *boots of speed.* Alex's agility, due almost entirely to his magical boots, was well documented by the sages and bards of a millennia ago.

Throughout the cavern are scattered Sharakan's greatest compulsion: coins. In a vast sea of coins, there are nine large bronze urns carved with the profiles of gargoyles (worth 175 gp each), which Sharakan enjoys filling and emptying much like a child in a sandbox. The dragon has kept himself thus cheerfully occupied for decades at a time when adventurers exploring the mountain have become scarce. Strewn about the cavern in the huge pile are 14,679 pp, 58,753 gp, and 56,334 sp, all mixed together in a chaotic jumble.

In addition, the following items can be found scattered about the lair:

—A large jumble of 23 suits of armor, many of ancient dwarven and elven workmanship. The pile includes a *shield of missile attraction −1,* two sets of *elven chain mail,* and one suit of beautifully crafted field plate armor (easily worth 10,000 gp). There is a 1-in-10 chance for any set of armor to fit a dwarf or halfling, and a 2-in-10 chance that it will fit an elf.

—A pile of over 50 weapons, many of them antique, well crafted, and perfectly serviceable. They include: eight jeweled weapons (randomly determined art objects), two *javelins of lightning,* and a *heavy crossbow of accuracy +3.*

—An unlocked chest filled with 11 large silver serving pieces worth 100-400 gp each. The silver items, once shiny, are now tarnished and appear a mottled black.

—An unlocked coffer holding 69 random precious stones and gems. Although many of the gems might be quite valuable, Sharakan prefers coins to fancy stones, so the gems are left ignored in an open coffer near the entrance to the cavern.

—An unlocked trunk near the rear of the cavern, filled with odds and ends: a scroll of *protection from reptiles;* another scroll with the spells *shocking grasp, lightning bolt, anti-magic shell,* and *power word stun* (at the 15th level); a third scroll with *aid, flame strike, blade barrier,* and *cure critical wounds* (at the 12th level); and 12 randomly determined art objects.

If the party somehow defeats the dragon, Sharakan will plead, lie, or cheat to save his life, swearing by Tiamat (a binding oath even to chaotic-evil dragons) that he will turn over all the treasure in his cavern and depart via his secret exit (see area 10), never to bother the PCs again.

9A. Magical Pool. For centuries, black dragons have bathed their wounds in this small pond when recovering from battle. The special nature of dragons, in combination with emana-

tions from the relic buried deep beneath the mountain, have caused this pool to become magical. Those bathing in its waters have their constitution permanently raised by one point. Subsequent bathing has no additional effect.

9B. Pickling Pool. To savor his entertaining battle with the barbarian Khirsa, Sharakan dragged her corpse into his lair and dumped her into an acidic pool to pickle her. After a week, she has gotten ripe to perfection, and Sharakan frequently gazes at the corpse in fond recollection of the admittedly short battle. He hasn't gotten around to eating her yet, preferring to save her until he has finished counting his coins.

Khirsa has been dead now for a week. If someone tries to *speak with the dead*, she acts as if she has just woken up from a long sleep and sounds very drowsy. She can answer general questions about Dirk and the other party members. Khirsa originally met Dirk on one of his adventures in the deserts far beyond the Val. As a reward for saving his village from a dangerous sphinx, the chieftain of a small desert tribe awarded his daughter Khirsa as Dirk's bodyguard and protector.

Khirsa quickly learned that her new master was a despicable wizard (no wonder he defeated the sphinx so easily), but the tribe's debt had to be paid. Over the years, Khirsa's admiration for her master reluctantly grew, but she always distrusted him. Her suspicions indeed proved correct, for Dirk left her to die at the claws of Sharakan (at least, that is her side of the story).

If someone attempts a *raise dead* spell, Khirsa will be too weak to accompany the party. She requires a week of bed rest to recover. All of her equipment can be found in the dragon lair, and she will insist on its return. The DM can roll up her stats if needed. Treat her as a 7th-level warrior with an 18 constitution (before *raising*). With this second chance at life, she considers her obligation to Dirk paid and will offer her services to the cleric who *raised* her. If her services are not needed, Khirsa will return to her home in the desert as soon as she is able.

10. Secret Exit. Sharakan has pushed a large boulder over the mouth to this pool-filled cavern. In the pool's depths there is a 30'-wide hole that leads to area H outside. This is Sharakan's main exit to the valley when he's hungry for sheep, but he has been too preoccupied with silly adventurers and his coin counting to go out hunting lately.

11. Rapids. The water here is considerably rougher, faster, and shallower than previously encountered in the mountain, moving 120' per round. The PCs will have to work hard to keep their crafts intact as impacts with the cavern walls become more serious and more frequent. If PCs fleeing from Sharakan attempt to walk down the rapids (the water is only 5' deep), they need to make successful strength and dexterity checks each round or be swept downstream. Anyone swimming downstream must make a saving throw vs. petrification (once per trip) or violently strike the channel wall for 2-8 hp damage.

12. Ancient Dock. Once the PCs reach this chamber, timing is of the essence, since there is a waterfall 250' in front of them. Quickly read the following passage to the players:

> The channel opens up into a wide cavern with a 90'-long gravel shore to your left. The water flow is a little slower here, about 100' per round. Ahead, you can see the four stone supports of what might once have been a pier that long ago collapsed.

The water is 8' deep in the center of the cavern but becomes shallow near the shore. Unless the PCs specifically state that they are heading for the shore, assume that they have now advanced 50' closer to the waterfall.

> You have drifted past half the shoreline. Ahead on the left, you can see 10'-wide stairs rising up from the gravel beach. Above the loud current, you can make out with increasing dread the sound of even louder rushing water ahead.

If the PCs are in canoes or rowboats, they will have no problem reaching shore if they backpaddle furiously. Unfortunately, the current is too fast for a bulky raft to maneuver quickly enough for the PCs to make it to the gently sloping shore. Even if the PCs decide to steer for shore at this point, they are going to overshoot by about 10' and hit the staircase instead. Frankly, the PCs would stand a better chance jumping off the raft and swimming to shore (they could just barely make it unless they were encumbered, in which case they would sink and drown anyway). Beyond the shore (next to the staircase), the water depth is 8'. The stairs have no banister but are low enough so that PCs could grab hold and pull themselves up (have them roll dexterity checks).

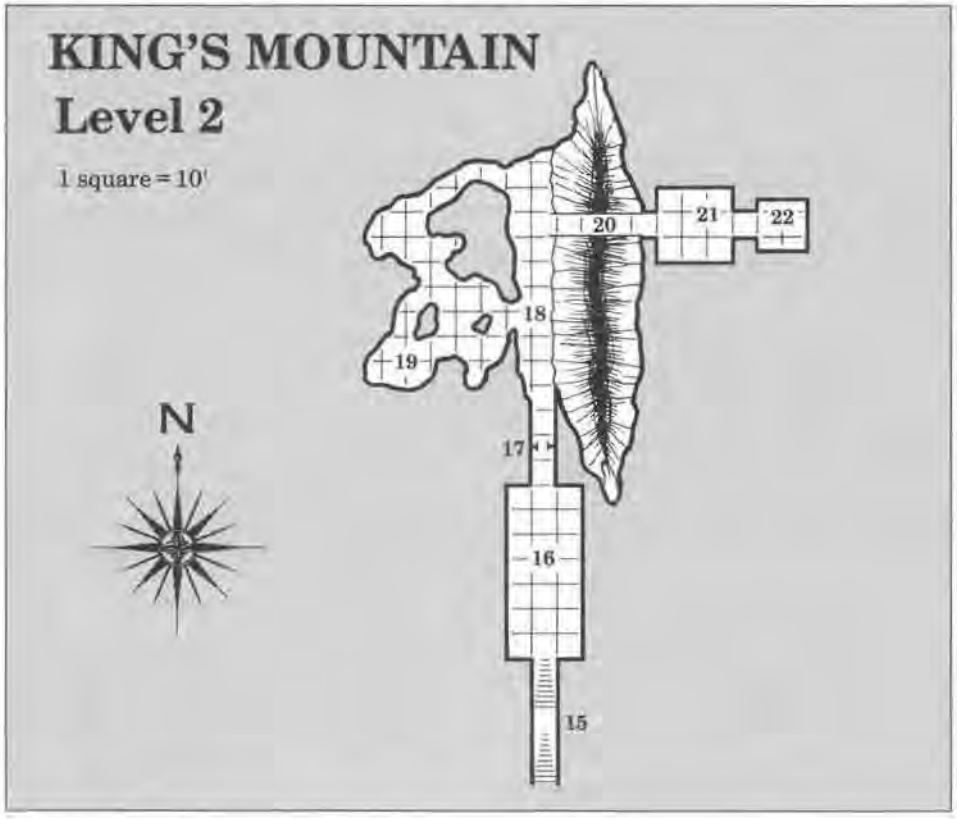
If the PCs either miss the shoreline or fail to grasp their impending fate, read the players the following passage:

> The staircase climbs 15' to a bridge, which passes over the stream before you and is quickly approaching. The bridge is made of stone and appears quite study. It has an intact stone bannister. By now, the sound of rushing water in front of you is unmistakable—you are heading directly for a waterfall. The cascade appears to be no more than 50' beyond the bridge.

It might be amusing to get out an egg timer and set it in front of the players for one minute just to build the suspense. The most simple escape operation at this point might be to quickly tie a rope to everyone in the party, tie the other end to a grappling hook, and throw it over the bannister of the stone bridge as the PCs approach. Of course, if the PCs aren't well equipped, this solution might pose a problem.

The bridge spans the river and leads to a narrow, rough-hewn corridor that heads west by northwest. When the party crosses the bridge, the PCs will have a nice view of the water rolling over the precipice into a black void.

13. Waterfall to the Source. As the PCs might have discovered by now, the Traveling River is a closed loop that flows from its source (area D3) to King's Mountain and is then *teleported* back to its source by the Stone of Gul. Any PCs falling down the waterfall are sucked into a magical vortex created by the Stone, shuttled magically through the crevasse in area 18, and finally *teleported* to the river's source at the stone giants' lair, where the travelers will be caught like fish in a net. The entire process takes about one second and wastes a tremendous amount of Gul's power, but that is exactly what the Stone's immortal designers intended.



14. The First Riddle.

There are four crystal pillars in this room, and in its center rests a pedestal with a 3"-diameter hole. The pedestal is carved with strange runes, and a small triangle with a striker hangs from a fine chain above the hole.

The runes on the pedestal are written in ancient Elvish and offer the following advice: "Feed the heart of the mountain, or the heart of the mountain will feed on you." There is a large stone portal opposite the entrance to the chamber. The two-ton stone door blocks access to descending stairs and has been protected against tampering by a *wizard lock* spell (18th level) and *Thiondar's permanent anti-magic field* (see the sidebar). The chamber and the portal have been heavily enchanted by Thiondar with the inspiration of the Stone. Gemstones poured down the pedestal provide the material components for the room's enchantments, which are triggered by striking the triangle.

The PCs must drop one of the following three sets of material components into the pedestal in order to power the enchantments that open the portal:

—1,000 gp worth of rubies

—4,000 gp worth of miscellaneous gems

—Any rock with a permanent enchantment (e.g. *loadstone, luckstone, gem of seeing,* etc.).

If the triangle is struck after one of these sets of components has been dropped down the pedestal, the pillars all glow with a diffuse pink light, and the portal swings open for five rounds, allowing access to the second level. Once closed, the portal cannot be opened from the other side (without using a *wish).*

If the gems are not dropped down the pedestal before the triangle is struck, the columns will not glow at all. Instead, they animate in the form of four crystalline caryatid columns and attack. Unlike normal caryatid columns, these vanish in a burst of red light when destroyed, and the corresponding column reappears in the room, to be reanimated when the triangle is struck again (if the proper components are not dropped down the hole in the pedestal).

Caryatid columns (4): INT non; AL N; AC 5; MV 6; HD 5 (for attack purposes); hp 22 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (long sword); SD half damage from normal weapons, magical weapons do full damage but without magical bonuses, 25% chance of breaking enemies' weapons when struck (modified down 5% per magical "plus" weapon possesses), +4 bonus to all saving throws; SZ M; ML special; XP 650 each; FF/18.

If the party drops some but not enough gems down the pedestal before striking the triangle, every 250 gp worth of rubies or 1,000 gp worth of miscellaneous gems causes one caryatid column to glow pink and prevents it from animating (e.g., 2,000 gp worth of miscellaneous gems will prevent two columns from animating, etc.).

There is no treasure in this room, only the ancient remains of skeletons who were hacked to pieces by the columns long ago. A tracker or ranger can notice the signs of a recent fight (over five days ago) in which three humans (Baine, Ellana, and Dirk) were involved before they presumably solved the riddle and left the chamber.

King's Mountain, Level Two

15. Murals on the Stairs. As the PCs descend, they will notice murals covering the walls, depicting the exodus of the Ch'thar from the valley and the elves' descent into the mountain. One mural shows a large tribe of elven warriors arriving in a swampy, overgrown valley teeming with gigantic reptiles. The next panel shows a leader figure, presumably the king, entering the mountain. The following panel depicts the elven people arguing among themselves. The next shows a warrior descending into the mountain while many of the elves leave the valley through the pass. The story continues with a mural that shows the king returning from the mountain, holding up the body of a warrior by the neck like a broken doll. The next image shows the few remaining elves going about life in a town in the valley. Another shows the elves packing their belongings onto small barges. The murals continue by showing the elves traveling through an underground river (the caverns seemed to be much bigger back then), unloading at the underground dock, and crossing the bridge. The final mural shows the elves

descending these stairs with tears in their eyes.

16. Hall of Murals. This walls of this empty chamber are covered with murals depicting the fate of Lioshand, Thiondar's champion who was unjustly accused of treason and killed by the king. Beautifully preserved like the murals on the stairs, these paintings depict four scenes over and over again in the same order: The first shows a young elven warrior lying on a stone altar with a robed elf standing with hands outstretched (as if casting a spell). The second mural depicts a sarcophagus, with the elven warrior's body placed inside. The third shows the robed elf making ritualistic gestures over a flaming corpse in the sarcophagus. The final mural shows a sealed tomb, with the elf chiselling runes into the stone.

A ranger or tracker will notice the tracks of three humans who passed through the hall last week, going directly to area 18.

17. The Arch of Warning. This arch prevents the passage of undead creatures, keeping Lioshand (see area 20) from wandering far from his post. In spite of its age, the arch still bears its original warning, written in ancient Elvish: "Defeat the Eternal Warrior or be cast into the Traveling River."

18. The Chasm.

> You are standing on a 10'-wide ledge beside a deep, dark chasm that is 40' wide and 100' long. From below, you can hear the sound of rushing water. In a cavern that opens up to your left, you can see the faint glow and flicker of a small fire. Ahead to your right, a 5'-wide bridge without handrails spans the crevasse, leading to the opening of a rough-hewn corridor.

The PCs can hear the rushing of the Traveling River 200' below the bridge in the crevasse. People and objects falling into the chasm are transported along with the river to its source at area D3. A ranger or tracker will notice that there are recent tracks leading back and forth between the western cavern (area 19) and the bridge (area 20).

19. The Abandoned One.

> Sitting on a stone in the middle of the cavern beside a faltering lantern, a large human in plate mail is crying. When he notices you, he rises and pleads, "Please help me. I have been abandoned here by my comrades beyond the second seal." He steps back and sniffles. "You must help me. I am cursed by that terrible sword." He indicates a large, two-handed sword leaning against the cavern wall, gleaming malevolently with a pale purple light.

Baine, *cursed* half-vampire: INT average; AL CN; AC −1; MV 9, fly 18 (C)*; HD 8+3 (formerly F8); hp 71; THAC0 11 (excluding bonuses); #AT 2; Dmg 5-10 or by weapon type; SA *energy drain, charm* by gaze*; SD *regenerate* 3 hp/round, +1 or better weapon to hit, assume *gaseous form* at 0 hp, immunities (*sleep, charm, hold,* paralysis, poison, death magic), half damage from cold and electricity spells, *shape change* to bat form*, summon animals (rats, bats, or wolves)*, *spider climb;* S 18/76, D 16, C 16, I 12, W 9, Ch 13; SZ M; ML 16; XP 4,000; MC (Vampire); *plate mail +2.* Abilities marked with an asterisk (*) come into play only if Baine becomes fully chaotic evil.

Baine has indeed been *cursed* by the weapon, named Deathsinger, that he discovered in a pyramid in the Majuur Desert five years ago. The *two-handed sword +3* is an ancient, feared weapon of the Night Winds, a house of ancient desert kings. When commanded to "sing," the sword emits a horribly pained wailing that can *cause fear* in enemies within a 90-yard radius if they fail a save vs. spells. Creatures of good alignment are repulsed by the horrific singing of the blade, distrusting and avoiding its wielder. The sword is an evil weapon and carries a terrible *curse* (which the current owner has only recently discovered). It has an intelligence of 15 and an ego of 12, and it speaks with a voice like the desert wind. It will burn anyone of lawful-good alignment who tries to pick it up (12 hp damage; save vs. paralysis for half damage).

Slowly but surely, every battle Baine has fought with the weapon has brought him closer to being transformed into a vampire (the Night Winds were all vampires, as any knowledgeable bard can tell you). In the past year, Baine has been unable to stand bright daylight, preferring to shield his eyes with a dark veil hung over the visor of his helm. Five days ago, his transformation into a vampire became nearly complete. Baine has not yet completely accepted his new role in life (or death) and has temporarily discarded his sword. As a result, his alignment has not completely shifted over from chaotic neutral to chaotic evil. With his low wisdom, the implications of an undead existence are only now beginning to settle in Baine's mind. If the PCs attack him, he will resign himself to damnation, pick up Deathsinger, and attempt to destroy them.

Although Baine revelled in his new vampire powers and abilities at first, he has not yet used them to take a human life. Once he does so, his transformation and *curse* will be complete unless he receives help. Any good-aligned cleric, with several minutes to study Baine and pray for guidance from his or her deity, will be able to diagnose Baine's *curse* and know its cure. Now in its terminal stages, Baine's *curse* can be reversed only if someone separates Baine from Deathsinger, and a lawful-good cleric of 12th level or higher level casts *remove curse, atonement,* and *bless* on him. Once the *curse* is lifted, Baine's alignment will gradually return to neutral good.

If the PCs can propose an efficient means of disposing of the evil sword (simply leaving it behind is a fairly good solution), Baine will gladly join the party and offer information about Dirk Derlith and his former companions. Baine would appreciate the loan of another weapon; he is proficient in the long sword, two-handed sword, dagger, spear, long bow, and horseman's mace.

As far as Baine is concerned, just about everything possible has gone wrong on this expedition. First, Khirsa the barbarian was trapped in Sharakan's cavern as the party fled to this level. Then, five days ago in the battle with the undead warrior that guards the bridge over the crevasse (see area 20), Francis the Bard was knocked into the river and disappeared (Baine presumes Francis dead), and Baine was practically thrown into the river, too.

Close to passing out, clinging on to the side of the bridge with one hand, and holding onto Deathsinger with the other, Baine was offered a chance to escape. The sword promised Baine the strength to survive and live forever.

Baine accepted, and great strength (18/76, that of a vampire) coursed through his arms. He found he could cling to the side of the bridge with no problem (due to a vampire's ability to *spider climb)* and fled to this area to recover. Baine discovered, to his amazement, that his wounds healed at a tremendous rate (due to a vampire's ability to regenerate 3 hp/round). When he had recuperated, he found that the surviving two members of the party had disappeared.

Baine can describe the other members of his party if prompted. Ellana, a tall and gorgeous—but unfortunately pious—cleric of Athena had been the object of Baine's dreams for the past several years. His lustful feelings for her have disappeared since his transformation. He is now clearly ashamed of what he has become ("I was an honorable man, once."). The leader of the expedition was Dirk Derlith, a half-elven wizard and rogue. Baine now holds Dirk (and Ellana, too, for that matter) in deep contempt for abandoning him. (Both Dirk and Ellana are now in area 23, though Baine doesn't know that.)

Baine's relationship with his sword, not surprisingly, decayed swiftly once he discovered his impending undead status. Deathsinger soon informed his master of all his new vampiric abilities, strengths, and weaknesses, and began suggesting to his master that he should destroy the lawful-good cleric, Ellana, when he discovers her. Deathsinger is perfectly aware that the *curse* is not yet complete and that Ellana poses a threat to its completion. The last thing the sword wants is to be left behind, so it will tell fantastic lies ("I can help you find Dirk and Ellana!") to influence the party not to discard or abandon it.

Baine has battled Lioshand on the bridge four times in the past five days, and each time he could not defeat him. Baine will warn the PCs about the eternal warrior but refuses to combat him further, knowing that he is not powerful enough to defeat him.

20. The Bridge and the Eternal Warrior. The bridge is 5' wide and perfectly sound. Once a PC has crossed the bridge to within 10' of the other side, Lioshand materializes out of the ether and commands the PCs to halt. If they do not comply, the ghostly figure attacks. The PCs must proceed single file across the bridge. Every time a PC is struck by the undead warrior, the adventurer must make a dexterity check or lose his balance and fall into the chasm to land in the Traveling River.

Lioshand (ghost): INT high; AL LE; AC −3 (5 if attacked ethereally); MV 9; HD 10; hp 77; THAC0 11 (excluding bonuses); #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; SD never surprised, cannot be turned, can become ethereal at will, immunities (*sleep, charm, hold,* paralysis, poison, death magic); SZ M; ML special; XP 5,000; MC; *quarterstaff +4.*

Due to the wording of Thiondar's powerful *curse,* Lioshand is semimaterial and always appears in his *elven chain mail* (which does not extend into the Ethereal plane), wielding his *quarterstaff +4,* with which he retains his specialization. His ghost retains the 18/21 strength and 17 dexterity he possessed in life; his total combat bonuses are +6 to hit and +9 to damage, from strength, specialization, and magic. While guarding the bridge, he cannot be surprised or turned. Lioshand has no power to age those who view him, nor can he *magic jar* victims. He views himself (rightly) as a *cursed* immortal warrior, doomed to guard a bridge for a king who unjustly killed him in a fit of insanity. His rage at his fate has turned into a hatred of all life, and he will attack the PCs ferociously, gaining a +2 on his initiative dice.

Once defeated, Lioshand screams painfully, "Not again! End this, please!" and dissipates into the ether, only to reform again in one hour unless his *curse* is broken (see area 21). Until Lioshand reforms, his magical items can be found with his ashes in area 21.

21. The Champion's Sepulchre. This chamber is Lioshand's final resting place. If the PCs read the runes chiseled on his sarcophagus, they see numerous magical symbols (the binding runes for the *curse)* and some normal inscriptions clearly stating Lioshand's crime. The sarcophagus also bears the owner's name and judgment: "This tomb belongs to Lioshand the Traitor, former Champion of the Ch'thar." Protected by a *wizard lock* (18th level) and *Thiondar's permanent anti-magic field,* the lid of the sarcophagus can be opened only by brute strength (bend bars/lift gates roll required; up to four can participate, adding together their percentage chances for success). Inside are the charred remains (now mostly dust) of Lioshand, his suit of *elven chain mail,* and his *quarterstaff +4.*

If Lioshand's ashes are scattered about the room, or if holy water is poured on top of them, the *curse* binding Lioshand to his current existence is broken, and the party will gain an additional 3,000 XP. If the PCs take Lioshand's gear without breaking his *curse,* they will be haunted by horrible nightmares. Each PC will lose one point of strength per day until someone breaks the *curse* or returns the gear to Lioshand's sepulchre (due to the wording of the *curse,* Lioshand cannot reform without them).

A ranger or tracker will notice two pairs of footprints (Dirk's and Ellana's) leading from the bridge into area 22.

22. The Second Riddle.

> This room is a 20', with an 8'-wide square dais up against the center of the east wall. The metal statue of an elf wearing a crown and flowing robes sits on a plain stone throne on top of the dais. The statue's expression is grim, and his left hand is outstretched, palm up, fingers splayed. You can also make out an ancient inscription on the dais in front of the throne.

Written in ancient Elvish, the inscription warns: "Adorn the hand of the king or face his terrible wrath!" The statue remains passive until a ring is placed on one of the fingers of its outstretched hand. If the ring is nonmagical or *cursed,* the metal statue looks down at its hand, frowns, takes off the ring, and fills the room with a puff of poison gas (the gas affects everyone in the room like a *cloudkill* spell). The statue then reassumes the position it held when the PCs entered.

Actually, the statue is an iron golem. If a beneficial magical ring is placed on its finger, the golem smiles. A huge 10' × 10' block of stone quickly descends to block the exit, and the entire room descends swiftly to the next level.

Iron golem: INT non; AL N; AC 3; MV 6; HD 18; hp 80; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 4-40; SA poison gas; SD +3 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML special; XP 15,000; MC (Golem, Greater).

Beneath the throne and the dais rests a magical device that moves the room up and down a mile-long shaft. Descending at over 480' per round, the elevator takes over a turn to reach its destina-

tion. During this time, the iron golem acts as a conductor for magical energy, which the elevator device draws from the ring on its finger, storing up enough power for one trip down and back up again. When the elevator reaches its destination with a stomach churning halt, the golem's expression again becomes grim. The ring (no longer magical) slips off its finger to land clinking on the stone dais.

One segment later, the huge block of stone descends, allowing access to area 23. The block rises in one round, and the elevator ascends to await new passengers. The elevator can be recalled from below only with a *wish.*

King's Mountain, Level Three

Throughout this level, the magical radiation of the Stone of Gul blocks spells like *blink, dimension door,* and *teleport. Teleport without error,* however, is powerful enough to function correctly. Minor detection spells like *detect magic* and *detect evil* have a 50% chance of misfiring and revealing that everything is magical or evil. Scrying, using either a device or spells like *wizard eye* or *clairvoyance,* also will not work within the Stone's strong magical field.

23. The Hangar.

> Beyond the elevator, you see a large, magically illuminated room hewn from solid stone, roughly 80' long, 50' wide, and 30' tall. A pair of huge doors is set in the north wall, and there are four stone platforms (9' × 15') raised 1' from the floor and evenly spaced in the southern half of the room. Large metal devices of ancient design rest on three of the platforms. A fourth such device appears to have smashed into the west wall, its metal platform and handrails buckled and twisted, its cylinders cracked and split to reveal that they are hollow.
>
> While you are observing this curious chamber, a half-elf emerges from behind the wreckage of the metal device and points a wooden wand at you. His eyes are steel gray, and his mouth is turned into a half-cocky smile. He says, "I suggest you put away your weapons and tell me who you are."

This is Dirk Derlith, the unlucky leader of the previous expedition to pierce the mystery of the mountain. After losing their entire party, Dirk and the priestess Ellana arrived in this chamber. Dirk figured out that the metal devices could fly, but while experimenting with the flyers, the ancient controls malfunctioned and he crashed into the wall, releasing two air elementals imprisoned in the metal cylinders. The elementals were beyond rational discussion and attacked immediately. In the battle that ensued, Ellana was slain and he himself was nearly killed in the process of dispatching the elementals. Dirk has been recuperating ever since, but after five days, he had all but given up hope for rescue.

Dirk Derlith (half-elf): AL CG; AC 1; MV 12; T13/M11; hp 14 (49); THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA quintuple backstab damage; S 14, D 18, C 6, I 18, W 11, Ch 15; PP 90%, OL 95%, RT 95%, MS 80%, HS 65%, DN 80%, CW 80%, RL 80%; ML 16; *bracers of defense AC 5.* He wields Flicker, a *short sword of speed +3* that allows him to attack twice per round with a bonus of +3 to his initiative rolls.

Dirk stores his traveling spell books (which include all the spells he has memorized plus *read magic, wizard lock, dig,* and *teleport)* and a *folding boat* in a *pouch of accessibility.* Therein he also has potions of *heroism, fire breath,* and *sweet water;* a scroll of *protection from electricity;* and a *wand of fire* with 18 charges remaining. His spells include: *comprehend languages, detect magic, feather fall, magic missile, ESP, Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter, fly, clairvoyance, dispel magic, lightning bolt, ice storm, improved invisibility, Otiluke's resilient sphere, cone of cold, dismissal, wall of force.*

Dirk will be wary of the PCs unless they are accompanied by Baine. If Baine is with the party, Dirk lets out a cry of amazement (he really thought Baine was dead), but Baine is less than overjoyed at the reunion. Within a few minutes, however, Baine breaks down and forgives Dirk for leaving him. Dirk begs the PCs to raise Ellana, whose body is lying in the shelter of the broken flyer.

Ellana, high priestess of Athena: AL LG; AC −1; MV 9; C12; hp 1, once raised (83); THAC0 14; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; S 11, D 12, C 18, I 13, W 18, Ch 18; ML 16; *field plate +3;* no spells. She is wearing a *ring of fire resistance,* and her *helm of telepathy* lies beside her. In her small pack, she has a scroll with *raise dead, cure critical wounds, cure blindness, cure disease,* and *commune,* cast at the 12th level.

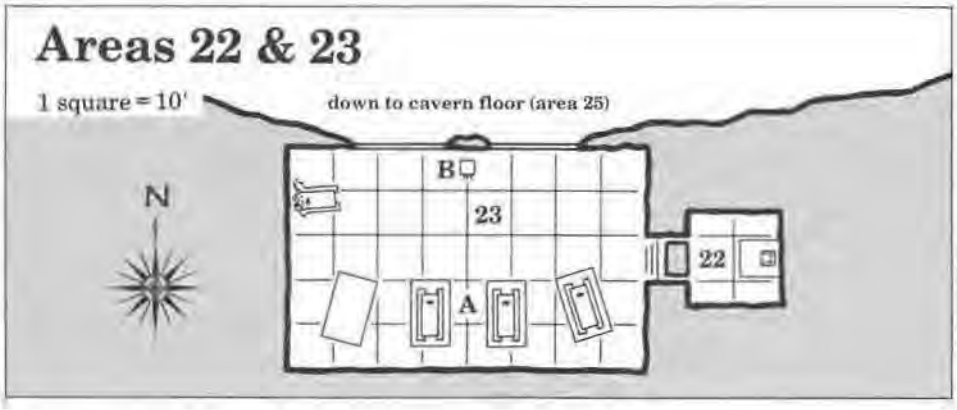
If the PCs can't raise Ellana through their own powers, Dirk will hand over her scroll of five spells and ask them to use it to bring her back to life. Once she is raised, Ellana's wide blue eyes flicker open, and she attempts a small smile of thanks at her savior. Representing the highest order of Athena's priesthood from Beryl, Ellana has a warmth and radiance that reflect her inner strength and more than amplify her considerable physical beauty. Prudent and gentle, she will fight only after all other possible alternatives have been explored and eliminated.

Dirk, on the other hand, is somewhat of a rascal, although basically a kind-hearted one. He began his career in rags as a cutpurse in the service of a charlatan magician but discovered he had more talent and ambition than his master. Dirk first met Ellana 15 years ago when the Berylian temple of Athena was embroiled in a plot hatched by the temple of Ares. Dirk saved the temple and has been friends with Ellana ever since.

After being revived, Ellana insist on praying for divine guidance and suggests the PCs do the same. First, however, she carefully analyzes and diagnoses Baine's condition, berating herself for doing nothing sooner. Ellana then prays for *remove curse, atonement,* and *bless* spells to return Baine from the brink of vampirism (if the PCs haven't done so already). She will be too exhausted and confused thereafter to receive any further spells from Athena and will need one full week of rest to recover from her ordeal.

This is a good opportunity for the PCs to rest up, regain spells, and break out the mead and beef jerky. While the PCs are catching their breaths, Dirk explains what he has learned about the flyers and what lies beyond the north doors.

23A. The Ancient Flyers. These ancient flyers were quickly constructed by Thiondar to transport the Ch'thar and their belongings to their new village (area 29). Their purpose served, the flyers were returned here (Thiondar felt they would interfere in the elves' "traditional" lifestyle), and the hangar and flyers were eventually forgotten. Once



the PCs have the time to inspect the flying machines in detail, read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Each device consists of a metal platform (5' × 10') connected to two 12'-long, 3'-diameter closed metal cylinders. The platform is ringed by a handrail of some sort, and there is a metal pedestal toward the front of the device. Three metal levers of different sizes protrude from the pedestal.

The first and largest lever controls the thrust by opening vents in the front and back of each of the cylinders, allowing air to flow through the cylinders and feed the air elemental trapped inside. Magical seals and wards on the cylinders prevent the elementals' escape. The second and third levers control the vertical and horizontal direction of the flyer by adjusting the angles of flaps behind each of the cylinders.

Air elemental: INT low; AL N; AC 2; MV fly 36 (A); HD 16; hp 88; THAC0 5 (enraged); #AT 1; Dmg 2-20; SA whirlwind; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ L; ML 15; XP 11,000; MC.

Dirk has learned all about the flyers from bad experience. As a profound believer in luck, he won't trust himself at the controls of one ever again. However, with a little persuasion, he can be goaded into riding on one—provided someone else handles the controls.

The three remaining flyers are incredibly ancient. Since they are not protected by powerful magic (they are more mechanical than magical devices), they are extremely dangerous forms of transportation, as Dirk's accident can attest. Each flyer can carry 10 people and travel 150 yards per round (fly 15 (E)). When starting up a flyer and navigating through the hangar doors, the pilot must roll a dexterity check and an intelligence check (1d20 each) or crash, inflicting falling damage on all in the craft and releasing two angry air elementals who attack immediately. For the PCs to leave the chamber, the hangar doors (see area 23B) must first be opened.

While operating in the great cavern, there is a 1-in-4 chance that the flyer will experience a major mechanical malfunction for every 7,500 yards traveled in the air (that's five hexes on the Level Three map). If this happens, roll 1d12 and consult the following table:

1-2. Thrust control lever sticks in place. The craft will be unable to slow down or pick up speed.

3-4. Altitude control lever sticks in place. The craft cannot rise or lower to ground level (time to get out the ropes).

5-6. Steering control lever sticks. The craft cannot change direction.

7. Thrust control lever breaks. The craft comes to a full stop.

8. Altitude control lever breaks. The craft quickly descends to the ground, but no one is hurt.

9. Steering control lever breaks. The craft flies in circles.

10. Heavy vibrations cause one of the cylinders to fall off. The craft's movement rate is cut in half.

11-12. Heavy vibrations cause a large crack in the platform. The crack grows wider unless the craft lands immediately. If no action is taken, the craft breaks apart (in one round), and all its passengers fall to the ground from a random altitude of 20'-120' (unless an altitude was previously determined).

Riding in the flyers is a hellish experience. The platforms vibrate and bend whenever the flight control levers are adjusted, and the air elementals in the cylinders make a terrible groaning noise. Using the flyers might seem like an unnecessary risk, but once the PCs open the hangar doors, they will get some idea why the flyers might come in handy.

23B. The Hangar Doors. When the PCs investigate the hangar doors, read the following aloud:

> The north wall of the room has two large metal doors 30' wide and 20' tall. Curiously, the doors appear to be partitioned into 1'-wide horizontal segments, and you can't see hinges anywhere. Between the doors is a waist-high pedestal with two large levers.

The left door no longer functions, but the right one will slowly rise (like a garage door) when the right lever is raised. This makes an incredible racket as tired machinery protests. Once the PCs have opened the door, read the following:

> The door rises to reveal that the chamber is located in the side of an impossibly large cavern. The ceiling is smooth and perhaps 200'-300' high, but it glows with a soft magical light and arches even higher in the distance. The air inside the cavern is warm and humid, and a thin mist lets you see only 1,000-2,000 yards. Sixty feet below you, the cavern floor appears to be a rolling grassland or plain. To your left and right, the cavern walls fade into the mist. There appears to be no way to climb down to the cavern floor.

The sight is awe inspiring, but in several rounds some giant wasps from a nearby hive (area 24) will come to investigate the loud sound of the door machinery. Ellana awakes from her trance of prayer to Athena and announces that the goddess informed her that the object of their quest lies many miles to the northwest. Athena gave Ellana other directions, but those will become apparent only once the party reaches area 30B. Of course, Ellana, Dirk, and Baine will all be glad to accompany the party, preferring to use a flyer than walk on foot. Their priorities are centered around one goal: escaping the Mountain alive. With Ellana in no shape to cast spells and with very few hit points, Dirk

and Baine will devote all of their energy to protecting the priestess. The threesome will leave the party at area 30, not taking part in the final encounter with Thiondar.

24. The Hive. Five rounds after the hangar doors are opened, three giant wasps come to investigate the noise.

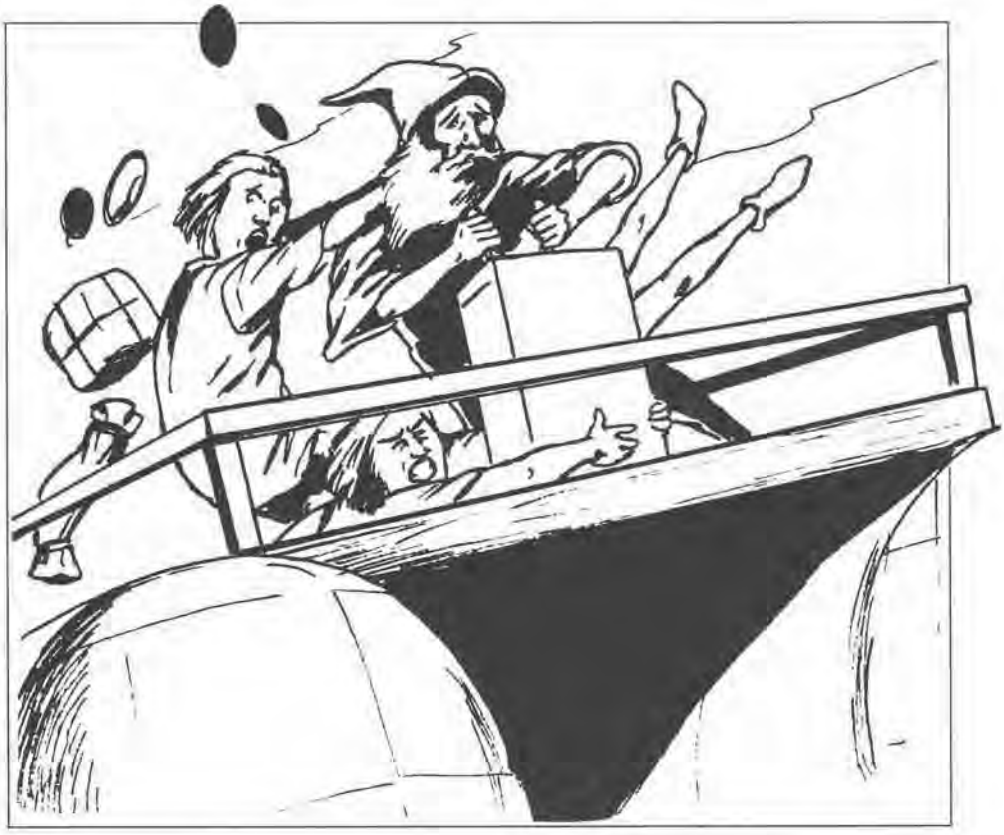
Their hive is located in the cavern wall about 1,000 yards east of the hangar. In it, 23 more giant wasps tend their wax-paper cells. The hive houses over 220 eggs, larvae, and pupae. While building their hive, the wasps uncovered a small vein of amethysts. There are 28 chunks of uncut amethyst lying in a corner of the lair, worth from 100-400 gp each because of their size.

Wasps, giant (3) INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, fly 21 (B); HD 4; hp 27, 23, 21; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/1-4; SA paralysis poison; SZ M; ML 8; XP 420; MC (Hornet).

25. The Plain. This part of the cavern is a rolling grassland inhabited by herds of giant reptiles and dinosaurs. When the gods of the giants created the Stone of Gul, they fashioned this huge cavern a mile beneath the surface to further drain Gul's powers. The immortals filled the cavern with the great lizards that walked the valley above; the cavern is heated and illuminated with Gul's diverted immortal power. The lizards in the valley on the surface have long since died, but here in the controlled environment, they have flourished and multiplied. For every hex, there is a 1-in-6 chance of a random encounter, many of which will be avoided if the party travels in the flyer. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d4 and check below:

1 **Giant wasps** (1-6): hp 26, 24, 23, 21, 20, 19; see area 24 for complete statistics. These insects are on patrol from their hive. They attack the PCs immediately but are easily driven off with fire.

2 **Stegosaurs** (1-4): INT non; AL N; AC 2/5; MV 6; HD 18; hp 103, 92, 88, 83; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20 (tail strike); SZ H; ML 13; XP 10,000; MC (Dinosaurs). These creatures are munching contentedly on the grass. If the party approaches within 100', the plated lizards tuck in their heads and turn their spiked tails toward the PCs until they leave.



3-4 **Monocloniuses** (1-6): INT non; AL N; AC 3/4; MV 6; HD 8; hp 52, 41, 40, 39, 38, 37; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2-16 (horn strike); SZ H; ML 11; XP 650; MC (Dinosaurs). This small herd is walking along the plain and will attempt to trample the PCs if they approach within 300'.

26. The Swamp. This part of the cavern is covered with a sprawling swamp filled with teeming insects and reptiles of all shapes and sizes. For every hex, there is a 1-in-6 chance of a random encounter, all of which will be avoided if the party travels in the flyer. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d4 and check below:

1 **Giant crocodile:** INT animal; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, swim 12; HD 7; hp 39; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 3-18/2-20 (bite/tail); SA surprise; SZ H; ML 11; XP 975; MC (Crocodile). The croc is pretending to be a log as it hides here waiting for prey. It likes the taste of iguanodons but will settle for a PC if it can get one.

2-3 **Iguanodons** (5): INT non; AL N; AC 4; MV 15; HD 6; hp 42, 39, 35, 34, 31; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/2-8 (thumb/thumb/tail); SZ G; ML 11; XP 270; MC (Dinosaurs). The iguanodons are sloshing around in the shallow water. They will run away if anyone approaches within 300'.

4 **Brontosaurus:** INT non; AL N; AC 5; MV 6; HD 30; hp 211; THAC0 5; #AT 2; Dmg 3-18/1-6 (bite/tail); SA step on victim for 4-40 hp, or rear up and crash down with forefeet for 5-50 hp; SZ G; ML 12; XP 22,000; MC (Dinosaurs). This huge creature is plodding through the shallow water looking for tender plants. The 40-ton thunder-lizard will ignore the party. Those foolish enough to approach within 30' will likely get stepped on.

27. The Lake. This part of the cavern is filled with a large lake that is over 100' deep in its center. If the party has lost their flier in a crash, Dirk suggests they cross the lake using his *folding boat.* For every hex, there is a 1-in-6 chance of a random encounter, many of which take place only if the party is sailing or swimming. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d6 and check below:

1-2 **Brachiosaurus:** INT non; AL N; AC 5; MV 6; HD 36; hp 223; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20 (bite); SA step on vic-

tim for 8-80 hp; SZ G; ML 12; XP 28,000; MC (Dinosaurs). This 85-ton dinosaur is wading near the shore and will ignore boats and swimmers.

3-4 **Dinichtys:** INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV swim 21; HD 10; hp 59; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 5-20 (bite); SA swallow victim whole on roll of 20; SZ H; ML 11; XP 4,000; MC (Dinosaurs). This 25'-long fish is looking for food. It will attack swimmers and attempt to capsize small water craft.

5-6 **Plesiosaurus:** INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV swim 15; HD 20; hp 135; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 3-12 (bite); SZ L; ML 10; XP 120; MC (Dinosaurs). This aquatic dinosaur attacks swimmers and boats until it has been wounded for half its hit points. Then it decides it has found enough trouble for one day and disappears beneath the waves.

28. The Jungle. This region of the cavern is covered with a thick jungle. The trees are full of colorful birds and the shadows of small monkeys. In some places, the PCs will have to cut themselves a path, and this will slow their movement rate by one-third. For every hex, there is a 1-in-6 chance of a random encounter, which can be avoided if the party travels in the flyer. If an encounter occurs, roll 1d4 and check below:

1-3 **Giant constrictor snakes** (2): INT animal; AL N; AC 5; MV 9; HD 6+1; hp 41, 33; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1-4/2-8; SA constriction; SZ L; ML 9; XP 650; MC. These snakes are hanging in the trees and drop on unsuspecting PCs with a +2 bonus to surprise.

4 **Ankylosaurs** (2): INT non; AL N; AC 0; MV 6; HD 9; hp 51, 43; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; SZ M; ML 11; XP 2,000; MC (Dinosaurs). These creatures are munching on grass in a clearing. They will tuck in their heads and attempt to crush PCs with their clublike tails if anyone approaches within 50'.

29. The Deserted Village. The jungle ends here near the mouth a large side cavern. Nearby, the PCs can discover the foundations of a small village. The only thing left standing is a stone pillar at the town's center, on which the history of the Ch'thar has been chiseled. Written in a corrupt and broken form of Elvish, the inscriptions are barely legible thanks to prolonged exposure to the humid environment, but an intent PC will be able to read the record of births and deaths in the tribe for six millennia (their chisel marks are small, and it's a big pillar), until the whole tribe was wiped out by a jungle fever. Spread by mosquitoes from the jungle, the disease soon took on epidemic proportions since the Ch'thar no longer had any clerics among them.

Only one old man, named Anachrin Anias, managed to survive the fever. Anachrin chiseled the last inscription on the obelisk: "I am the last of the Ch'thar. I go now to the hall of that callous and distant being who was once Ch'thar and our king, hoping he will send me into the world with the news of our tribe's passing." The PCs may note that Anachrin considers himself the last of the Ch'thar, even though the king was alive. Thiondar had been estranged from his people for so many millennia in his tower (see area 30) that many of the tribe no longer considered him to be a member, though he occasionally appeared to check up on things with "his" people.

Anachrin approached the king who, in one of his irrationally generous fits of insanity, used one of his magical banners (see area 30B) to *teleport* him to the valley above. Anachrin traveled to the court of the gray elves and recorded the journey on his shield. (The PCs were given a rubbing of that shield by Leopold at the beginning of the adventure.)

The pillar is 5' in diameter and 40' high. It is unlikely that the PCs will be able to transport this incredible historical find, but they may make a rubbing of the inscriptions, for which they will be paid 5,000 gp by Leopold. The party should also receive 5,000 XP for recovering this information.

30. The Tower. When the gods of the giants finished the Stone, they placed it in the base of a tower in the center of this cavern, its final hiding place from the eyes of mortals. Shaped like a giant obelisk over 300' tall, the tower has no entrances except on the terrace at its summit. Protected against any form of magic (*disintegrate, passwall,* etc.), the tower has become overgrown with thick vines in the millennia since its creation. Consequently, it is possible for PCs without climbing proficiency to scale the tower's surface (its outside walls have a slope of roughly 15°), although it will take them twice as long as a rogue who is skilled in such matters. Of

course, if the PCs are still piloting an intact flyer, they should have little trouble landing on the terrace (have the pilot roll a dexterity and wisdom check to see if the craft lands safely).

The King and His Split Personalities

As the PCs might have been able to figure out by now, Thiondar discovered the Stone of Gul in this great cavern many millennia ago. Because of his prolonged exposure to the formidable magical energies of the artifact, Thiondar was quickly driven insane by the Stone and developed split personalities. The balance of good and evil is characteristic of all beings, but in the case of the insane king, his good and evil sides were split between two personalities. Thiondar would remain himself for days, only to lose consciousness one evening as a darker personality, called the Keeper, emerged and took control of his body.

Recently (within the last millennia or so), a more objective and neutral personality has emerged to represent the king's intuition and instincts. This personality, due to the insane effects of the Stone, considers himself to be a couatl. The couatl deplores the constant battle between Thiondar and the Keeper but does not recognize them as separate personalities of the same insane mind. The couatl does know, however, that Thiondar has devised a secret plan to destroy the Keeper but needs the help of the PCs.

Thiondar, the king's good side, is a fearful and paranoid chaotic-good wizard. His evil side, which the king calls the Keeper, is a brutal and violent chaotic-evil warrior. These two rival personalities have been in constant battle for control of the king's body for centuries, watched by the impartial couatl personality. Thiondar, in his madness, has convinced himself that the Keeper is another person entirely, trapped inside the tower with him, always hiding and waiting for the perfect chance to kill him (in a way, this is not far from the truth, and it has turned the king into a paranoiac).

The Keeper, on the other hand, is strong, foolhardy, and haughty. He is completely aware of and is capable of using Thiondar's magical abilities, but uses them only to fashion magical items and murderous spells for his own benefit and amusement. He enjoys killing slowly, causing as much pain as possible with his bare hands, not using quick and painless death magic. The Keeper, for example, is responsible for killing Lioshand and cursing him into an undead existence.

Although incredibly ancient, the king is not undead. The power of the Stone has halted his aging. If the relic were ever destroyed, he would age many thousands of years in an instant. Both Thiondar and the Keeper are painfully aware of their dependence on the artifact and cannot even leave the tower for more than a day without feeling drawn back to the Stone's presence. It has taken Thiondar millennia to prepare himself for the sacrifice and the consequences of destroying the artifact, but the Keeper certainly will never permit the Stone's destruction.

Although Thiondar has been able to *teleport* into and out of the tower, using the banner in area 30B, for at least two millennia, he hasn't bothered to leave his tower. Long ago, through the use of a *wish* spell, Thiondar learned that a group of adventurers would eventually arrive of their own accord and free him of the Stone. As a result, Thiondar adopted a passive and fatalistic attitude. He created the first two riddle rooms (areas 14 and 22) so that only a skilled and crafty group of adventurers would be able to find him. If they made it this far, they would undoubtedly be strong enough to stand up to the Keeper and destroy the artifact. As an elf, Thiondar is patient by nature. If the current group of PCs is not strong enough, maybe the next group will be.

Statistics for the king appear in the final encounter of the adventure (area 30E), where the PCs must defeat the Keeper. It is important to keep in mind the styles of the different personalities, each of which uses the same body and abilities quite differently. Thiondar relies heavily on magic. The Keeper, on the other hand, prefers to fight hand to hand. The couatl is elusive and cryptic; he gives the impression of knowing much but reveals little.

Finally, the powers of the Stone of Gul are outlined in a sidebar. They are included in case the PCs manage to defeat the Keeper without destroying the artifact, but the party should be forewarned that dabbling with such powerful energies carries dire consequences!

30A. The Platform of Welcome. When the PCs arrive at the top of the great tower, they are immediately greeted by a feathered, winged serpent. This is actually Thiondar *shape changed* into a couatl. He has been watching the party's progress in one of his banners (see area 30B). As mentioned in the previous section, the couatl is the most recent development in Thiondar's ongoing insanity. A split personality of the most harmless sort, the couatl emerges very infrequently.

Today, the couatl is overjoyed to have visitors in his lonely home. He gladly informs the PCs about Thiondar, the Stone of Gul, the last of the Ch'thar, and anything else he feels the PCs might find useful. On the topic of the Stone, the couatl become most serious, recounting its long history (in conjunction with Thiondar and the Ch'thar) and mentioning that the king became trapped by the Stone soon after his arrival (this is what Thiondar has suspected all along). The couatl also introduces the PCs to the existence of the Keeper, explaining him only as a being who is trapped in the tower along with the king. The king and the Keeper have been battling each other for millennia, the couatl reveals, but neither has ever been able to vanquish the other.

The couatl is a difficult but important role for the DM to play. The couatl should reveal just enough information about Thiondar and the Ch'thar to clarify the past, but not too much about the relic and the Keeper. The couatl considers Thiondar and the Keeper to be separate individuals and will answer all questions about the Keeper vaguely and mysteriously.

After indicating the wide ramp leading downward (or perhaps after being asked a question that is just too specific), the couatl gives the party a wide, reptilian smile and vanishes, *teleporting without error* to the Hall of Banners (area 30B) one level below and resuming the shape and personality of Thiondar.

30B. The Hall of Banners.

> The ramp eventually winds down into a square hall illuminated by *continual light* spells. The walls are hewn from solid stone, and seven 20'-tall banners hang from the ceiling. Opposite the entrance, on a throne and dais similar to the one you saw

in the elevator room, an elf sits calmly in resplendent white robes, with a long sword in a pale blue sheath at his side. He smiles at you invitingly. "Come in, my friends. It has been so long since I have had any visitors."

Clad in a white *robe of the archmagi*, Thiondar acts as though he has been expecting the PCs (which he has). Trapped for thousands of years with the Keeper and unable to defeat his nemesis by himself, Thiondar entreats the PCs to help him.

The PCs will note that Thiondar appears to be in great discomfort as he asks them for help. As a shadow of pain crosses his face, the king tells the PCs that their only hope for defeating the Keeper rests in the library. Then, with a cry of agony, Thiondar vanishes (another *teleport without error* spell). The king appears in his library (area 30D) and tears off his white robes, allowing the personality of the Keeper to emerge. The Keeper dons a black *robe of the archmagi* and descends to the base of the tower to protect the Stone of Gul and await the arrival of the PCs.

The seven banners hanging in the hall represent Thiondar's first experiments involving teleportation and scrying within the strong magical field of the artifact. Drawing from the power of the Stone itself, the six banners on the north and south walls act like limited scrying devices: Each is permanently focused on one spot and transports creatures in one direction only. Through them, Thiondar has been watching the PCs' progress with interest since they activated the enchantments in area 14. The six minor banners offer tall views of the mountain pass (area A), the ruins beside the great basin (area G), the room of the first riddle (area 14), the elevator and the second riddle (area 22), the hangar (area 23), and the village ruins in the cavern (area 29). The scenes shown are "live," showing all events in those areas as they are occurring at that moment.

The tall banner opposite the throne is Thiondar's most sophisticated experiment. Also powered by the magic of the Stone, the seventh banner acts in most respects like a *mirror of mental prowess*. However, it can transport creatures only once per day, after which it completely ceases to function while it stores up energy for the next day. When the PCs enter, the great banner is focused on the ruins of area G.

If any one of the banners are taken down, or if the Stone is destroyed, they all immediately lose all magical properties and become normal pieces of white cloth.

Having been foretold of the banners' existence and operation by Athena during her meditation, Ellana discreetly has Dirk and Baine escort her through the great banner to the ruins as soon as the PCs' backs are turned (the DM should carefully play through this part of the adventure; if necessary, the threesome will simply tell the PCs that they wish to leave as quickly as possible, then will go). Skeptical of her own chances of surviving the final encounter with Thiondar, Ellana has wisely decided to return home to Beryl. Dirk and Baine, not reckless enough to continue to push a run of extremely bad luck, are more than eager to escape the mountain as quickly as possible.

Consequently, when the PCs descend to the next level of the tower, they will notice that their three newest companions are missing. In front of the great banner, which will now be blank, the PCs will discover any weapons and items they loaned to Baine. Through one of the minor scrying banners, they can watch Dirk, Ellana, and Baine greeting their henchmen and hastily making preparations to leave the valley.

30C. The Hall of Arms. While the Hall of Banners is Thiondar's favorite abode, the Keeper generally spends most of his time in this room, practicing his skill at arms. In a rack against the west wall rest normal weapons of all imaginable shapes and sizes: daggers, darts, axes, spears, pole arms, staves, swords, maces, etc. One complete set of exquisite field plate armor (sized for a human) rests upright on a pedestal beside the weapons rack.

In the center of the chamber, a 30'-wide circle has been chiseled into the stone floor. If anyone steps inside the circle, the suit of field plate will animate, grab a two-handed sword from the weapons rack, and attack anyone within the circle.

Sparring Armor: INT non; AL N; AC 2 (see below); MV 9; HD 1 (see below); hp 6 per HD (see below); THAC0 19 (see below); #AT 1 (see below); Dmg by weapon type; MR 100%; SZ M; ML special; two-handed sword.

This armor (one of the Keeper's creations) is designed to give any warrior a good workout. Initially, the armor has AC 2, 1 HD, and 6 hp. Protected by *Thiondar's permanent anti-magic field* during its enchantment, the armor is utterly unaffected by magic of any kind. Once defeated, it reanimates in the following round with one better armor class and hit die. This reanimation continues for a number of times equal to the highest level of warrior in the room. The armor ceases combat and returns to its place by the weapons rack as soon as its opponent leaves the circle.

The armor is proficient in all modes and styles of armed and unarmed combat; it will even respond to verbal commands (such as "En guard!" or "Lay on!"). The full suit can be sold for 20,000 gp to a wealthy aristocrat who wants an excellent sparring partner.

Other than the weapons, the rack, and the armor, there are no other furnishings or treasure in this chamber.

30D. The Library. This chamber is furnished with a long table, two chairs, two immense (80'-long) bookcases, and one small bookcase. The 30'-long table bisects the room like a low black oak wall. Hand-carved from a single tree, the huge table weighs about 750 lbs. and is easily worth 5,000 gp. At each end of the table are two tall black-oak chairs. The chair nearest the door has been recently tipped over, and Thiondar's white *robe of the archmagi* is draped negligently over it.

At the end of the table nearest the door, there is a large jumble of papers written in archaic Elvish (mostly astrological calculations for an upcoming solstice on an alternate Prime Material plane) and a large sheet of paper with one line written hurriedly on it: "Warning! If you find this, please use It. Destroy the thing downstairs. Send it to the fire. I am long past saving." The instructions are purposely cryptic to avoid attracting the attention of the Keeper, who emerged just as Thiondar finished writing the message. As Thiondar intended, the Keeper glanced at what he had been writing, didn't understand it (or didn't want to devote the time to understand it), and went downstairs. The PCs will have to look over the items in the study and try to figure out what Thiondar's note means. Spells like *augury, commune,* and *contact other plane* should reveal that, in Thiondar's

note, "this" should be read "this note"; "It" refers to the *rod of transport;* "the thing downstairs" and "it" refer to the Stone of Gul in area 30E. The note's last sentence is unequivocal.

There is a 1-in-10 chance of detecting a secret compartment in the table, which contains 12 quills from magical beasts, two blank scrolls, and three spell scrolls (determined randomly).

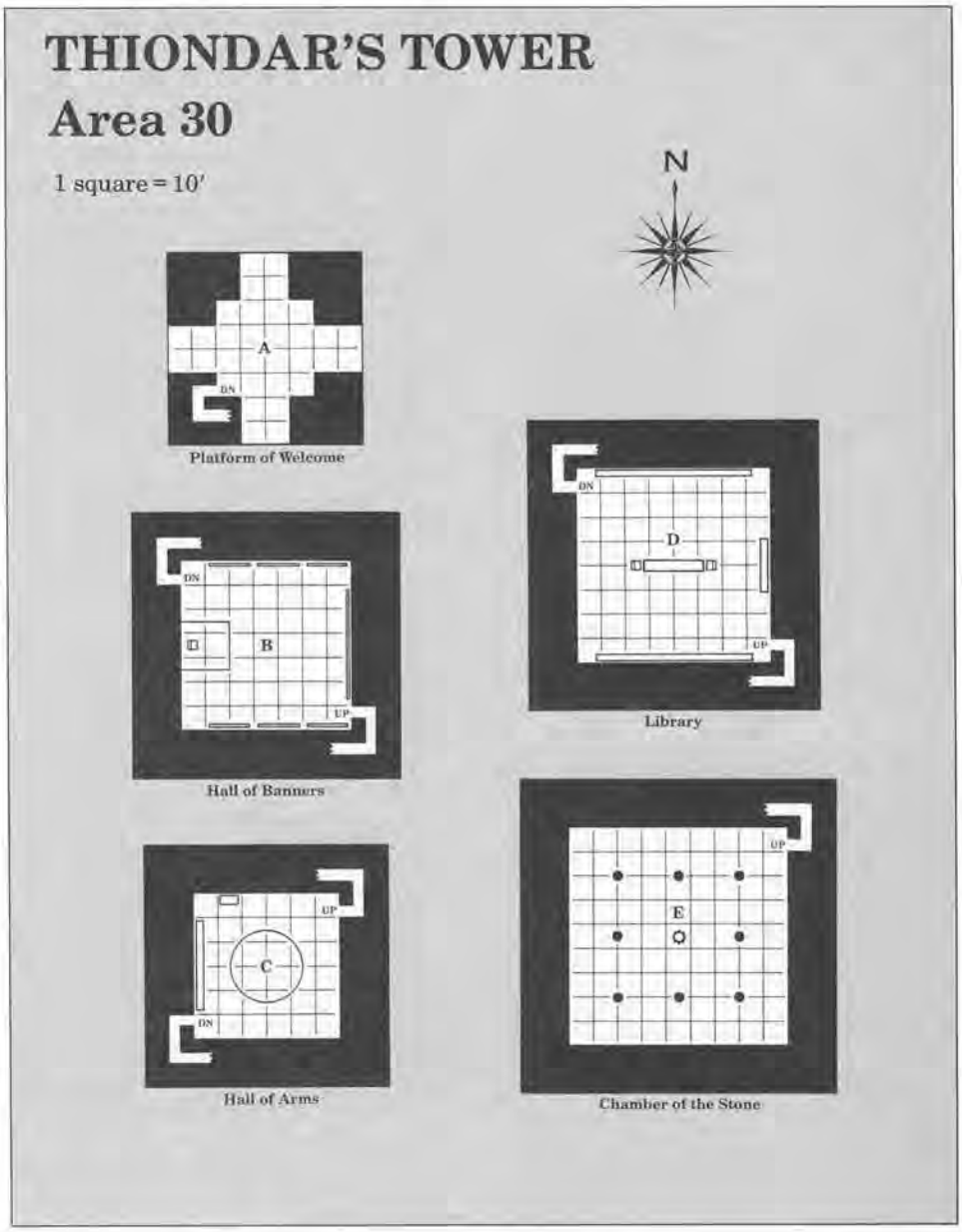
There is a small bookcase with four shelves at the east end of the table. On the top shelf rests an empty *quiver of Ehlonna* and Thiondar's favorite *long bow +3,* named Seeker.

The second shelf holds a row of nine large volumes bound in rough, gray leather (actually the hide of a tyrannosaurus), each protected by a *symbol of insanity.* These are Thiondar's spell books, which contain all first- through ninth-level spells in the *Player's Handbook* (after all, Thiondar has had millennia to devote to spell research). Other spell books were scattered in secret locations across several worlds and alternate Prime Material planes; this set of books is Thiondar's "basic" set. There is also one new spell: *Thiondar's permanent anti-magic field.* The effects of this spell are described in detail in the sidebar.

The third shelf holds three large tomes: a *book of exalted deeds* (which Thiondar has never been able to use), a *manual of golems* (which Thiondar has promised himself he would use for the past four centuries), and a *vacuous grimoire* (which Thiondar kept in case it proved useful someday).

The fourth shelf supports a long metal rod with a small, 2"-diameter steel globe at one end and a knob at its base. The knob has six settings: a triangular-cut ruby, a circular-cut diamond, a black dot, an infinity symbol, a wave, and a green triangle. The knob currently points at the triangular ruby. There are magical runes inscribed on the length of the rod.

This powerful device is a *rod of transport* with 50 charges. When the runes on the rod are pronounced and the globe at its tip is touched to a person or an inanimate object, the person or item is instantly *teleported without error* to the destination indicated by the knob (see below), expending one charge for every 250 lbs. so transported. The command phrase written on the rod ("Begone hence") can be deciphered by a *read magic* spell, but the device can be used only by a wizard. If unwilling creatures are touched with the rod, they are allowed a saving throw vs. spells, albeit at a −4 penalty. The rod's settings are:



Triangular ruby: The heart of the plane of Elemental fire. This region is so hot that it is avoided by most denizens of the plane (as most humans avoid a volcano). Anyone or anything transported to this location (including the Stone of Gul) will be instantly melted or incinerated, regardless of fire resistance.

Circular diamond: The plane of elemental Earth. This is the equivalent of *teleporting* into solid rock, unless those transported are specially (i.e., magically) prepared.

Black dot: An alternate Prime Material plane (DM's choice).

Infinity symbol: The Astral plane.

Waves symbol: A small deserted island on a calm purple sea. Under a pale blue beach umbrella by the shore, there is a folding chair with a small table beside it. A magical goblet that is perpetually filled with delicate mead, and a thick book in an alien language (*A Tale of Two Cities)* rest on the table. This is

where Thiondar goes when he wants some hours alone to read a relaxing book (before the Stone draws him back to the tower). The PCs can remain here for as long as they like; it is perfectly safe. The rest of this alternate Prime Material plane is left to the DM.

Green triangle: The Val forest, roughly 100 miles north of the Silver Lake and Beryl.

Although the PCs might confuse this rod with a *rod of lordly might*, the DM should do nothing to convince them otherwise until they attempt to use it. (Serves them right for memorizing the magical-item tables in the *DMG.)*

Thiondar and the Rod

After centuries of conducting research by taking short trips to several different planes to gather books, Thiondar has discovered that the Stone of Gul can be destroyed only if it is bathed in the flames at the heart of the plane of elemental Fire. To this end, the king embarked on further centuries of spell research (when not interrupted by the emergence of the Keeper) to perfect *teleportation* out of the disruptive magical field generated by the artifact. His centuries of work culminated in his creation of the *rod of transport.*

The banners in area 30B represent Thiondar's first success with such enchantments, although the banners draw their power from the Stone itself. The rod works perfectly well in the presence of the Stone and is even powerful enough to affect the artifact. Thiondar has carefully set the rod to transport whatever is touched to the heart of the elemental plane of Fire (unless the setting is changed), knowing full well that his material body will be destroyed along with the artifact.

Thiondar would destroy the Stone himself, but he is certain that the Keeper would prevent him from carrying out the deed. Long ago, when he began researching a way to destroy the Stone, Thiondar used a *wish* spell to hide his intent from the Stone and the Keeper. The Keeper, more inclined to physical endeavors than research (except when fashioning magical weapons or armor), has never taken an interest to any of Thiondar's investigations.

The Archives

The two 80'-long bookshelves contain an incredible wealth of information, collected on Thiondar's trips to other planes. The north shelf holds the results of Thiondar's millennia of research and includes complete histories, legends, and myths of the continent. There are tomes (written on this plane and others) about astronomy, astrology, alchemy, physics, art, poetry, literature, architecture (ancient, classical, and modern; elven, dwarven, and human), aviation, armormaking, weapon-crafting, mechanical and structural engineering, herbalism, geology, geography, biology, electricity, metallurgy, horticulture, viticulture, and zoology. Thiondar has written numerous logs and travel guides for several alternate Prime Material planes, the Astral plane, and the planes of elemental Fire and Earth.

Finally, there are several hundred books dedicated to the study of magic, many of them written by Thiondar himself in ancient Elvish. The books include the descriptions of all spells and magical items available in the *DMG* and *PHB*, plus the underlying theories necessary for practicing effective magic. Any wizard who successfully recovers, translates, and ponders this knowledge of magic—a process that will take one year—will gain 30,000 XP, one time only. The wizard cannot go adventuring during this time, but thereafter will automatically recognize any spell in the *PHB* by the verbal, somatic, or material components used by the caster, and can also recognize the basic properties of any magical item given in the *DMG.* (In game play, the wizard's player is allowed to reference these two volumes at any time.) This knowledge should not unduly upset a campaign if the DM simply becomes more creative with the magical items he places in future treasure hoards.

Unfortunately for the PCs, none of the books are written in any modern language. Those books related to architecture, science, and engineering are written in ancient Dwarvish, with a few in ancient Gnomish. About half the books are not even from this plane and are written in completely alien languages (like English, if the DM so desires). How the PCs manage to translate the works from the library (should they not wish to sell them to the College of Antiquity) is left to the DM's discretion. Just because the information is there doesn't mean it can be picked up in a snap! Additionally, the DM may have some of the books written in code, trapped with spells, or otherwise protected.

When the PCs have time to study Thiondar's books closely (probably after the adventure is over), they will discover the famous transcripts of Anachrin Anias' conversations, recorded when he reached the kingdom of the gray elves thousands of years ago. After Anachrin died, these books mysteriously disappeared. This happened as a result of Thiondar's ambivalence. In spite of his profound respect for historical accuracy, Thiondar was torn between letting the outside world know about the fate of his tribe and keeping it all a tragic secret. After Anachrin died, Thiondar used the banner to collect the transcripts and bring them here. If he had known about Anachrin's shield, he would have no doubt brought that along as well.

Recorded in these transcripts is a reasonably accurate account of what befell the Ch'thar starting at the time they arrived in the valley, as described in "For the Dungeon Master," and ending with the description of the plague (see area 29). Thiondar read the transcripts and could not bring himself to believe a word of them, preferring instead to think that his people had always been loyal and had been happy with their new underground home. He did not bother to destroy evidence to the contrary, however.

The contents of the bookcase on the southern wall of the chamber have been gradually amassed by the Keeper over the ages and reflect his dark tastes in science, art, and magic. Infrequently, the Keeper will take a short journey using the great banner in area 30B, and even more infrequently will bring back a book that struck his fancy. While not as large as Thiondar's book collection, the Keeper has saved books about military history, strategy, armed and unarmed combat, brainwashing, torture, poison, and necromancy. He has several journals describing the workings of the outer planes, and has the true names of numerous dark powers dwelling in the Abyss. Some elements of the collection reflect a disturbed mentality and are certain to disgust PCs of good alignment. Destruction of the worst of these works will bring 5,000 XP to a good-aligned cleric or paladin; uses for the rest must be invented by the DM.

The archives in this room represent a wealth of knowledge that would keep several dozen sages and wizards gain-

fully employed for several decades. Recovering at least part of this information for the university is a major objective of this adventure—but it is likely the PCs will have trouble bearing away more than a fraction of all this material. The DM should strictly enforce considerations of encumbrance, damage to books from weather or combat, etc.

30E. The Chamber of the Stone.

> You have entered a large chamber, roughly 100' square, with a ceiling 50' high supported by eight large pillars. On the floor in the center of the room rests the largest ruby you have ever seen, roughly the size of a very large treasure chest. The ruby glows brilliantly from within, casting a pinkish light throughout the chamber. While the rest of the tower was relatively cool, this chamber is very dry and hot (roughly 120°F), due to the radiation of the ruby.
>
> And you see Thiondar facing you, standing 50' in front of the gem. He now wears a set of midnight black robes and has drawn his long sword. His face is twisted into a hateful leer as he yells: "You have defiled the Stone of Gul with your loathsome presence! Now you'll pay the ultimate price!"

The Keeper immediately begins to cast a *wall of stone* spell to block the exit ramp behind the PCs. In his arrogance, the Keeper easily considers himself more than a match for the puny PCs; he doesn't want to have to run all over the tower to hunt down the PCs should they decide to flee. He intends to eliminate this petty nuisance now, once and for all.

Thiondar, king of the Ch'thar and Keeper of the Stone of Gul: AL CG or CE (insane); AC −2; MV 12 (24 with *haste);* F12/W18; hp 85; THAC0 9 (without bonuses); #AT 2 (4 with *haste);* Dmg by spell or weapon type (sword Lifeshielder); SA attack spells, specialized in long sword, total bonuses of +8 to hit and +15 to damage with sword; SD protective spells, 65% magic resistance (due to Lifeshielder and the *robe of the archmagi),* +4 bonus to saves (due to Lifeshielder and robe; more bonuses available from dexterity and wisdom vs. certain spells); S 17, D 18, C 12, I 19, W 11, Ch 17; ML special; XP 20,000.

Thiondar has cast the following spells on himself, in order, just before the PCs enter the room (numbers in parentheses show how many rounds each spell has left before it expires): *stoneskin, protection from normal missiles* (175), *detect invisibility* (86), *haste* (18), *fire shield* (chill version; 18), *globe of invulnerability* (17). The *stoneskin* spell will work against 12 attacks. In the tower, he has already used *shape change* and *teleport without error* twice. His memorized spells now include: *charm person, friends, magic missile* (×2), *unseen servant, ESP, mirror image, stinking cloud, web, dispel magic, hold person, lightning bolt, charm monster, confusion, bestow curse, fear, ice storm, phantasmal killer, polymorph other, shout, advanced illusion, cloudkill, conjure elemental, cone of cold* (×2), *dismissal, feeblemind, domination, telekinesis, wall of stone* (cast as noted earlier), *disintegrate, flesh to stone, limited wish, maze, power word blind.* He wears or carries the following magical items, all of which he fashioned for himself:

—a *ring of wizardry* (doubles fourth- and fifth-level spells), worn on his right hand.

—black *robe of the archmagi,* worn.

—a *girdle of cloud giant strength,* worn about his waist.

—a *sword +5 defender* named Lifeshielder. Enchanted using *Thiondar's permanent anti-magic field,* this sword has the ability to confer magic resistance to its wielder when used in combat. For every plus used in defense, the wielder gains 20% magic resistance. The sword's armor-class bonuses extend not only to melee attacks (as per the *DMG)* but to missile and other attacks as well.

Throughout this melee, the Keeper sets the weapon at +2 to hit, +3 to defend, thereby conferring on himself 60% magic resistance. Although Lifeshielder is not currently intelligent, Thiondar enchanted a custom-made *amulet of life protection* into the pommel of the sword to house his soul, should the PCs destroy him or the Stone of Gul. Thiondar and Lifeshielder are discussed in further detail later.

After casting *wall of stone,* the Keeper wades into melee using Lifeshielder, preferring to destroy the PCs slowly and painfully. Confidently protected from magical and physical assault by his spells, he will first attack the warriors of the party. If his protections are dispelled, or if he runs out of sword-wielding PCs, the Keeper resorts to magic, using his considerable arsenal of spells to blast any remaining PCs into oblivion. If severely wounded, he casts a *limited wish* spell to restore all of his lost hit points (for the limited duration of 18 rounds) and continues fighting.

Given the Keeper's knowledge of the party from his extensive scrying on them, the DM may wish to add extra tactics that will crop up in the midst of melee combat. The spells *maze* and *power word blind* are recommended for taking out powerful opponents rapidly, prior to combat (fighters are preferred for *maze,* and *power word blind* for wizards). *Shout* is employed if low-level hirelings are brought in, if the party has many potions or delicate items it means to use, or if several PCs are badly wounded and might be slain by the spell at once. *Confusion* will incapacitate numerous opponents at once if the Keeper has the time to cast the spell. *Ice storm* and *cone of cold* are his preferred area-effect spells. *Web* and *hold person* are useful against limited num-

Thiondar's Permanent Anti-Magic Field
(Abjuration, Alteration)

Level: 9
Range: Object touched
Components: V, S
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: One object
Saving Throw: None

This spell creates a permanent transparent barrier around any one object, causing it to become impervious to magic and spell effects. It prevents the entrance of spells, including summoned or *charmed* creatures. The spell-caster can choose to cast one 2nd-level or two 1st-level companion spells on the object beforehand. For instance, were a mage to cast *hold portal* and *alarm* on a door or chest, he could then conclude by casting *Thiondar's permanent anti-magic field.* The companion spells are thereby made permanent and protected from being dispelled by the anti-magic field. Casting this spell lowers the wizard's constitution by one point, but this loss can be recovered by the use of one *wish* per point lost. This enchantment can be broken only by a *wish.*

bers of opponents, who can then be hacked apart. *Magic missile* will be used to attack opponents who refuse to close to melee range. *Mirror image* will be used only if the Keeper switches to casting spells exclusively.

If the PCs are being trounced by the Keeper, gently remind them about Thiondar's advice in the note from the study. While the Keeper is occupied battling the party's warriors, it should be relatively easy for a wizard to approach the Stone of Gul and touch it with the *rod of transport.* If the wizard hasn't tampered with the setting and speaks the command phrase, the artifact will be *teleported without error* into the heart of the plane of elemental Fire and instantly destroyed. In a matter of seconds, the Keeper ages 15,000 years and crumbles to dust.

For PCs interested in such things, there are enormous amounts of coins stacked in the far corners of this room. Allow them to take as much as they want to carry (hinting that the books in the library are far more valuable). However, soon after the Stone has been destroyed, the party hears the sound of distant thunder slowly growing louder.

Thiondar and Lifeshielder

Once slain, Thiondar's soul (now free of insanity and all memory of his former mortal existence) passes into the pommel of his sword, and Lifeshielder becomes a sentient blade with a chaotic-good alignment. Having surveyed his possible alternatives, Thiondar chose life as a sword over death. The amulet cannot be removed from the sword by any normal means, and even if it could, such an action would disenchant the weapon.

The blade retains all the erudition Thiondar possessed in life, including his conversational ability in Elvish, Dwarvish, and Giantish (all types). The blade can *read magic, comprehend languages,* and communicate telepathically with its owner. It can also *detect magic, invisibility,* and traps of large size. Desiring to explore the rest of the known planes of existence, the sword can *teleport without error* once per day (up to 600 lbs.) and will gladly welcome any chaotic-good PC to be its new companion (the sword will never consider itself the possession of anyone).

The blade has a 19 intelligence and an ego of 25. Although congenial and easily pleased, Lifeshielder insists that its companion take it on extensive travels around the world. It becomes edgy and plaintive if the PC rests more than three months without adventuring.

Concluding the Adventure

If the Stone of Gul is destroyed using the *rod of transport,* the Traveling River ceases to flow and the valley begins to cool down to the temperature of the surrounding mountains. All of the enchantments that draw their power from the Stone cease to function as well, including the first and second riddle rooms (areas 14 and 22) and the banners (area 30B). Of more pressing concern to the PCs is the great cavern, which was illuminated and supported by the Stone. The cavern slowly begins to collapse, making a great thundering sound that the PCs will hear soon after the Stone's destruction.

There are only three ways for the PCs to escape from the cavern before it collapses completely (they have about two turns). First, now that the Stone is gone, they can *teleport* individually (probably saving only one or two members of the party). Second, they can ask Lifeshielder for help in *teleporting* (again, this is effective but has a 600-lb. maximum). Third, they can use the *rod of transport.* If they haven't thought of it already, you might want to hint that they should change the rod's destination. After disposing of the artifact, the rod should have 40 charges left, more than enough to transport about five tons of material. All of the books (plus the furniture) in the study could not weigh more than three tons. As a result, the rod will have enough charges to transport the whole party and as much of the library as they wish to take along with them. The transportation can be accomplished by *teleporting* individuals, then book cases, then the last PC, or by having everyone hold hands while touching the book cases. The method does not really matter since the rod is controlled by a wizard's thoughts, not semantics. Of course, don't tell this to the PCs. Let them sweat the details, if they care to. Once they arrive at their new destination (be it the Val forest, a purple beach, or wherever), the PCs should have ample time to memorize *teleport* spells (from Thiondar's spell books if not their own) and transport their find piece by piece back to Beryl. This will no doubt take some time, and the DM is encouraged to think up some encounters for that long period of transition.

Leopold and the College of Antiquity will be grateful for any information the PCs can tell him about the fate of the Ch'thar. Leopold will love talking to Lifeshielder and will offer the PCs 50,000 gp for the sword; the blade itself will beg not to be sold to a stuffy old college. The college will offer to buy Thiondar's spell books (see *Unearthed Arcana,* page 79, for suggested experience and monetary value of spell books) and his huge library (the entire library is worth 300,000 gp; scale down the price by whatever fraction of the library the PCs recovered). In addition, it is suggested that the party receives a total of 55,000 XP for solving the riddles and destroying the Stone of Gul. The College of Antiquity will temporarily confiscate all of the treasure the PCs gained (as per their agreement) for copying, cataloging, and identifying. Magical items and treasure will be returned within the week; it will take six months for a small army of scribes to copy the books (unless the PCs want to sell them).

Dirk Derlith's expedition will return to Beryl one month later, with the bard Francis Nightchaser in tow. They will congratulate the PCs on their fine deed (the PCs are the talk and toast of Beryl) and take them to the nearest pub to celebrate.

The adventure can conclude here or be expanded by the DM. What do the deities of the giants think about the PCs' destruction of the Stone? Will they declare a vendetta against the PCs and Beryl? That is for the DM to decide, for it clearly falls beyond the scope of this module. Ω

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